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ESSAYS

ON

EASTERN QUESTIONS.

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BY

WILLIAM GIFFORD PALGRAVE,

AUTHOR OF 'CENTRAL AND EASTERN ARABIA.'

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF DERBY

WHOSE GUIDANCE OF ENGLAND'S FOREIGN POLICY

HAS BEEN ALWAYS MARKED

BY A STATESMANLIKE INSIGHT

INTO

CHARACTER AND RACE

THESE ESSAYS

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY

DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR

INTRODUCTION.

To expect that the collection of a few Essays from the scattered periodicals in which they originally appeared, and their republication in a more condensed form, can have any material effect towards removing erroneous ideas, or substituting exacter ones, about the Mahometan East of our own times, would be presumptuous indeed. Yet even these writings may in a measure contribute to so desirable a result; for correct appreciations are, like incorrect ones, formed not at once but little by little: true knowledge is a construction, not a monolith.

These Essays, taken together, form a sketch, mostly outline, part filled in, of the living East, as included within the Asiatic limits of the Ottoman Empire. Now, as for centuries past, the central figure of that picture is Islam, based on the energies of Arabia and the institutions of Mahomet, propped up by the memories of Chaliphs, and the power of Sultans; and, though somewhat disguised by the later incrustations of Turanian superstition, still retaining the chief lineaments, and not little of the stability and strength, of its former days. Round it cluster the motley phantoms of Eastern Christianity, indigenous or adventitious; and by its

side rises the threatening Russian colossus, with its triple aspect of Byzantine bigotry, Western centralization, and Eastern despotism. This group, in its whole and in some of its details, I have at different times endeavoured to delineate; and if the pencil be an unskilful one, its tracings, so far as they go, have the recommendation, not perhaps of artistic gracefulness, but at least of realistic truth.

The first, second, and third of these Essays have for their object the portraiture of Mahometanism, as it now exists among its followers throughout the greater part of the East-Turkish Empire. A fourth assigns its special attitude at the present day; and a fifth gives the details of a local development of the same force in a remote corner of its demesnes.

In the sixth Essay the most prevalent forms of Eastern Christianity are passed in review; while its 'Greek' or Byzantine modification is more minutely illustrated in the seventh. The eighth describes one of the many struggles between the Christianity of Russia on one side, and the Islam of the Caucasus on the other.

The ninth and tenth supply the background of Arab life and vigour in the times which immediately preceded or followed the birth of Mahometanism.

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I.

MAHOMETANISM IN THE LEVANT.

قَدْ كَانُوا شَاهِدُوا دَفْنِي عَلَى قَدْ لِهِمْ: جَمَاعَةٌ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا قَبْلَ مَنْ دَفَنُوا:

Dead and buried had they seen me, so their ready tale they spread;
Yet I lived to see the tellers buried all themselves and dead.

Arab Poet.

(PUBLISHED IN "FRASER'S MAGAZINE," AUGUST, 1870.)

NOTICE.

THIS and the two following were written at Trebizond, in Asia Minor, after several years of residence or travel. In these three Essays I have endeavoured to classify, so far as possible, the Mahometan population of the East Ottoman Empire, according to its principal social divisions; with a separate sketch of the characteristic features of each. Those of official rank, civil and military, come first; the landowners and peasants next; then the mercantile classes; the learned professions follow; while the pastoral tribes, Koorde or Arab, the maritime classes, and the 'mixed multitude' of the Mahometan Levant bring up the rear. Why I have marshalled them in this order will sufficiently appear in the treatment of the subject itself.

Like the other writings in this volume, these particular Essays have no pretensions to being exhaustive; they supply samples, suggest general effects, and no more. But the samples are all facts; and the general effects the results of actual and long-continued observation.

The only objection I anticipate from some, is that my view of human and Islamitic nature in the East is over-favourable; more so, at least, than that taken by many other European travellers and writers, modern ones especially. But, after all, as we see and hear, so we judge; and 'to speak of a man as we find him,' is just judgment. Perhaps, then, I have been more fortunate in my Eastern experiences; perhaps less prejudiced. Besides, a disciple in this

matter of Chrysostom, himself a native of Syria, I hold with him, that man has naturally more good in him than evil, is of himself more prone to virtue than to vice; and I find, or seem to find, that Mahometanism,—the nearest approach made by any set creed to what is called 'natural religion,'—has perhaps, on the whole, less tendency than any other system I am yet acquainted with, to cramp and thwart the innate excellence of human nature. Hence I am not surprised to meet with much that deserves esteem, much that attracts sympathy, among the followers of Islam; though much also is wanting, much positively awry. Yet the earth is, as Clough says, 'very tolerably beautiful;' and so are the men on it too, even though Mahometans.

THE East, the Levant East especially, abounds in sights charming at a distance, and in general effect, but of which the details will not always bear too near an inspection. Constantinople when viewed from the Bosporus, Damascus from the heights of Anti-Lebanon, are instances in point.

But there are other sights in the Levant, beautiful alike from far or near, partly on their own account, partly from association and suggestion, the perspectives of the mind. And to this class belongs one that our Western friends may at their pleasure share with us, if they will join in a saunter this evening across the busy Meidan or open space—square we cannot call it, though it answers the purposes of one, for it is the most irregular of polygons—that lies in the eastern quarter of our *pro tempore* home, the town of Trebizond, on the Black Sea coast. Round the verge of this Meidan, and visible from it further off at intervals through the town, rises a forest of tall thin minarets, ghostly white against the slaty star-sprinkled sky. But now each minaret is gorgeous with circlets of light, some more, some fewer, formed by rows of lamps, three, four, and five deep, threaded at intervals on

the slender half-seen stem. And even now, before we are well across the Meidan, bursts forth from every turret, from every crowned gallery of rays, the loud modulated cry that asserts the Unity of God and the veracity of the Prophet.

Some commemoration of more than ordinary sanctity, some night of note, is evidently on hand; but as we do not happen to be at the moment aware of the precise date in the Mahometan calendar, we stop a turbaned passer-by, who has just saluted us on his way mosque-wards, and enquire of him what mean all these extra lamps and accompanying signs of extra solemnity. His reply reminds us that this is 'Leylet-ul-Raghey'ib,' or 'Night of Desires;' the night namely preceding the first Friday in Regeb, sacred month, and prelude of Ramaḍān; whence follow many supernatural excellences and privileges; not much better known, mayhap, to the Western world in general than are those of St. John's or of Hallowmas Eve at Trebizond itself.

A few minutes more, and beneath the festooned lamps that illuminate the interior of every mosque, line after line of turbans, reaching back from the 'Miḥrab' or sanctuary (an analogous but not an exact translation), where stands the prayer-reciting 'Imam,' to the outermost door, will at one 'Allahō-Akbar,' 'God alone is great,' bow prostrate to the dust; and the head of the Pasha will touch the floor-mat side by side with that of the poorest day-labourer of the town in one act of adoration, one without more or less in each and all; the act that, while it acknowledges the divine mission of Islam, rejects every other creed, every other system.

That Mahometanism is fast declining, fading, waning away; that the day is not distant, may already be

calculated, when the mosques of the Turkish Empire from Galatz to Basrah will convert or re-convert themselves into churches (though in favour of what particular form of Christianity may not be so easy to conjecture—the choice is a large one!); that pigs will soon lose their prescriptive immunity from Turkish knives, and beer and wine wash excellent Anatolian hams down once Islamitic throats; that Mecca will only be known as a railroad terminus, and the Koran be registered by some Constantinopolitan Disraeli among *Curiosities of Literature*, are pleasing speculations, more pleasing as hopes, and fit to cheer the drooping spirits of those who mourn over the consecration of a heretic, or the disestablishment of a Church. Nay, even the cool-blooded Gallio of Pall Mall has been found among the predictors of the fall of Islam; and the verdict of a Mill or a Lefevre might be on this subject not dissimilar in the main from that of a Spurgeon or a Manning.

For ourselves, neither prophets nor sons of prophets, but mere lookers-on, by business of the State or otherwise, in Turkey, we must sadly confess that some sixteen years or so of Levant residence have as yet opened to us no glimpse of a so 'devoutly to be wished' consummation; nor do the converging lines of the Mahometan prospect indicate to our optics any vanishing point, however distant. On the contrary, if the future be, as runs the rule, foreshadowed in the present, and if sight and hearing avail anything to discern the 'signs of the times,' these readily lighted lamps, these answering cries 'No god but God,' 'Mahomet is the Prophet of God,' these long lines of Mecca-turned worshippers, among whom every rank and degree is merged in the brotherhood of Islam, tell a very different tale.

The ostrich was believed to hide its head in the sand on the approach of danger; and when it had thus insured the disappearance of the hunter from its own field of vision, to infer illogically that the said hunter had ceased to exist. Ostriches of this kind are numerous, not in Africa only, but even in Europe; minds that, when their own horizon, often a very limited one, does not include a given object, are prone to conclude that there is no such object at all. Add the paternity of wish to thought, add a fair amount of prejudice, add misinformation, and we shall cease to wonder at certain statements and opinions current enough about numerous topics, where facts would, we might naturally have thought, have warranted conclusions precisely opposite. Islam, in its present and in its future, may stand for an example.

Take misrepresentation only. Thus, we have heard, not once, but repeatedly, and on seemingly good authority, that the fast of Ramaḍān can now scarce lay a claim to even a decent pretext of observance; that the veil is already dropping from the faces of Mahometan women, the harem opening its jealous gates; that the mosque is habitually deserted for the theatre, the 'medreseh' for the 'café chantant;' in a word, that European customs, dresses, inventions, organisations, literature, and so forth, will have soon rendered the Asia of the Muslims a thing of the past.

Let us endeavour to determine first how far all this is true; and next, if more or less true, what it portends.

And here, at the very outset, we may be met by a plausible objection, the objection of those who say, 'What need of further research in so beaten a field? and how should Europe, how should England in particular, not know the East, whether Mahometan or Christian, land, and people, and all? Is not all that lies from the

Ægean to the Tigris, from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf, pictured in the pages of Keith, and written in the book, the red-bound book, of Murray? Have not a Lane and a St. John given us the *entrée* of houses and harems? has not a Slade passed the armies and the navies of the East in review before us? has not a Strangford unveiled, evening by evening, the Isis of its politics, a Sale the Cybele of its religion? Who can err with such guides? or complain of darkness with so many and so brilliant lights around?'

True, the guides are faithful, the lights brilliant, and the authorities first-rate, each in his kind. But a handful of gold-dust would not be more surely lost if scattered over a Sahara of sand than are the opinions and facts conveyed by informants like these, when diluted beyond all recognition among the far greater number of errors, prejudices, and misstatements that, having once found currency, still abound on every side. Witness the giant misconceptions so often reflected from European opinion upon European statesmanship and diplomacy, regarding the relative positions of 'Christians' and 'Turks;' witness the popular portraits of either worthy to rank with Shakespeare's Joan of Arc or Dryden's Aurungzebe; witness nine-tenths at least of our leading newspaper articles on the Sultan's visit in 1867; witness the surprise evinced when any truer view of Mahomet and Mahometanism, as Mr. Deutsch's admirable, though somewhat one-sided, Essay in a late *Quarterly*, for instance, is given to the world; surprise which avows pre-existent ideas of a very different colour. It would not be too much to say that the vulgarly received idea of Mahometanism as it was, is, and may be, bears scarce a closer resemblance to the reality than do Luther's Reformation in the pages of Baronius or the French Revolution in

those of Alison to their historical counterparts. Nor is the reason far to seek.

When false has to be sifted from true, it often becomes no less necessary to enquire who was the sayer than what was the said; more especially when religions, parties, public characters, and the like, are under discussion.

Now, excepting the few already noticed, and setting aside those whom evident interest or national sympathy excludes from the impartial witness-box, we find our usual masters in the Eastern school to be three: the Tourist, the Resident, and the Levantine. Let us call them up each in his turn.

The average Tourist need not detain us long. He who has studied Turks in Pera or in the Frank quarter of Smyrna, and Arabs at Alexandria or Beyrout; he who has never conversed save through the medium of a Greek or Maltese dragoman; he who with time limited by a travelling ticket, and with a stock in hand of knowledge regarding Mahometan history, literature, and customs, equal about to that of 'Tancred' setting out for Mount Lebanon and the Queen of the 'Ansarey,' as it pleases him to call them; such a one has all the right to speak and to be listened to regarding Mahometan Turkey, present or future, that a Japanese or a Spaniard would have on Irish Church Disestablishment or the Landlord and Tenant question after an equal time passed on the quays of Portsmouth, or in the precincts of Leicester Square. And even should his random guesses and hazardous assertions ever happen to be right, small merit of his,—'a hit, but no archer,' says the Arab proverb.

Nor can the resident Europeans, forty-nine out of fifty, show a better title to their magisterial diploma. Cigarette-smoking for four or five hours in an office or

chancery, lounging for two or three more along a European-frequented road, or boating it on the Bosporus; the rest of their time passed in society exclusively European and mostly national, amid European cards and billiards, or reading the latest arrived European periodicals; unless the knowledge of Islam and the solution of its problems be imparted like the wisdom of Solomon during the hours of sleep, it is hard to conjecture when or where our European friends whom diplomatic, consular, or commercial interests detain in the East, can possibly acquire them. The truth is, that far the greater number neither possess such knowledge, nor care to possess it.

But if the Resident, whatever his real or acquired nationality, Latin or Teutonic, be not a genuine European, but a Levantine, that is, one born in the Levant, and with a moiety of Greek or Armenian blood in his veins to dilute the other half, French, English, or Italian, as luck may have it, then, 'oh thou, whomsoever thou mayst be,' desirous of solving the Asian mystery, pass on, nor hope in that office, in that parlour, at that table, to read the riddle of the East. No man would seem by birth and circumstance better entitled to cosmopolitanism than the Levantine; no one in fact passes through and out of this world in completer ignorance of all except its Levantine aspect even as regards that little corner where he has vegetated. To a more than European non-acquaintance with the spirit and often with the very letter of the institutions around him, the Levantine adds a more than Greek or any other 'native Christian' prejudice against the Prophet and his followers. 'Rakee' his ordinary, sometimes his hourly, drink, cards his chief pastime, dogs his pet companions, swine-flesh, where attainable, his favourite food; all four objects as re-

pulsive to any true Muslim as the first could be to a teetotaler, the second to a Quaker, the third to a Goethe, and the fourth to a Jew; no wonder that his house is rarely visited by a disciple of Islam, and then only under the compulsion of some immediate necessity, some affair to be quickly and exclusively despatched. Nor is the Levantine himself more frequently found within the doors of his Mahometan neighbours. A band apart, he and his colleagues pass their hours in the tattle and scandle-mongering of their tribe, aping, but never imitating, European fashion, 'alla Franga,' as they call it; of Europe itself, its politics and its tendencies, its feelings and customs, they may possibly have what imported knowledge *Galignani* or *Charivari* can give at a distance; with the Asiatic, the Mahometan world around them, they have no communion whatever. The nearest, the only point at which the circle touches the Islamitic is in words of command or abuse to some Mahometan out-of-door servant, whom poverty has induced to accept the pay of the 'Giaour' he despises—ah, Byron, Byron! how came you ever to make the 'Giaour' into a hero?—or in the fellowship of some ne'er-do-weel 'Be-lillah,' i.e. scapegrace of a young Turk, in whom strong drink and its accompaniments have effaced all of Islam except the name.

Besides, if we look over to the other side of the hedge, we shall find that the genuine turban-wearer, be he Turk or Arab (of Persians we advisedly say nothing), is on many grounds averse from too much intercourse with the hat-wearer, Levantine or European even. National pride, the pride of a conquering though now a declining race, the haughty memories of great Caliphs and Sultans, the sack of Constantinople, the siege of Vienna, the conquest of half a

world keep him at a distance from those whose every gesture is an assumption, not of equality merely, but of superiority; religious pride, the pride of him who bows to one God only, the Unchanging, the All-powerful, the Eternal, estranges him from the polytheist, the idolater, the unbeliever; personal pride contrasts his own ceremonial purity with the uncleanness of the unablutioned swine-eater; family pride places a barrier between the 'Beg,' the descendant of so many noble chiefs, so many lords, and those of whose fathers he knows nothing, except that they may have been, and probably were, shopkeepers or spirit-sellers.

Injurious and blameable such feelings may be, but they exist; nor are we now occupied on a diatribe or a panegyric; we only state simple facts.

But no such sentiments intervene to hold aloof the 'native Christian' from welcoming in the European resident or visitant, if not a man and a brother, at least a tool and a gain. He fastens on the stranger as naturally, I once heard a Turk say, as a flea on a dog; and is not more easily to be shaken off. His tongue is ready for any flattery, however gross; his hand for any service, however base; while his eye is steadily fixed on the lodestar of the European's pocket, whither hand and tongue tortuously but surely direct his course. He is the first to greet the new-comer on the steps of the Custom-house, and the last to quit him on the quarter-deck of the steamer; the Alpha and the Omega of the profits are his also. Thus repelled on the one side, and attracted on the other, what wonder if the traveller, ignorant of those he foregathers with no less than of those from whom he turns away, hears and sees only through Greek, Maltese, or Armenian ears and eyes; if the Levantine herds with his kind, or, lower still, with the store-

house keepers and retail-job dealers of the native Christian population; while the resident gentleman, diplomatic, consular, or business, strives to preserve his own national mind and tone, by excluding the contact of every other; and returns, after few years or many, to Florence, Paris, or England, almost as Italian, French, or English, as when he first arrived in the East, and also almost as ignorant? Nor can he be much blamed for so doing; better, in general, no companionship at all than the companionship of such as hang on the European's foot-track in the Levant.

Enough of these and theirs. Let us now cast aside (in imagination only, of course) the hat, don the turban, and survey the Islamitic world around us from an Islamitic point of view. And, hey presto! the supposed unit 'Mahometan' disentangles itself into a round dozen of figures, each different from the other, and each holding a distinct and separate place in the gradations of Islam, as in those of nationality and patriotism.

It is a very trite observation, yet one to be carefully borne in mind, that in the Levantine East—that is, throughout the entire tract of country included really or nominally in the existing Asiatic Turkish Empire—nationality and religion are almost convertible terms, so much that not the specific differences only, but even the intensitive degrees of the latter, go far on investigation to trace out the limits of the former; which is itself again, historically considered, the groundwork and often the ultimate cause of the latter. Among Mahometans, however, the essential simplicity of whose creed hardly admits of other dogmatic variations than shadings too faint almost for the eye of an outsider, the correctness of this rule is at times

less evident than it is among the adherents of the more modifiable, because more complicated, Christian formula; though it may in general be exemplified not ambiguously in varieties of practice, even amid apparent uniformity of theory. But these varieties, which arrest at once the eye of an Eastern, might prove unnoticeable, or, at least, unintelligible, to a European.

Hence, while not forgetful of the general rule, we will on this occasion assume a different classification, and review our Levantine Mahometans according to their social rather than their national distribution. To the Civil Service, so important in a country where self-government is not even an aspiration, we will assign the first place; the military must content themselves with the second; land-owners and peasants, merchants and townsmen, lawyers and divines, shall follow in due order. Shepherds, sailors, dervishes, and such like odds and ends of society will find their place as occasion offers; wholly anomalous classes, Koordes and Bedouins for instance, require to be treated of apart. Nor will we minutely distinguish in each class between its component Turks and Arabs; though, as our actual residence lies—much to our regret—among the former, we will give their nationality the precedence throughout.

'Tis known, at least it should be known,' that orthodox Mahometanism admits four doctrinal schools, slightly differing each from each in theory and in practice; those, namely, of Mohammed Ebn Idreesesh-Shafey'ee; of Malek Ebn Ins; of Ahmed Ebn Hanbal; and of No'oman Aboo-Ḥaneefah. Now while the three former have found favour among Arabs and other Semitic or African races, the Turks on their first conversion to Islam adopted and have ever since adhered

to the fourth, or Ḥanefee school. It was well said by the shrewd and learned Moḥee-ed-Deen (of Ḥamah, in Syria), that 'in the circle of orthodoxy, the teaching of Ebn Ḥanbal' (the strictest among the four great masters) 'might stand for the centre, and that of Aboo-Ḥaneefah for the circumference.' More indulgent than any of his brother doctors, Aboo-Ḥaneefah stretched the rigid lines of Islam almost to breaking; the doubtful concessions of a moderate indulgence in fermented liquors, of non-Mahometan alliance, and of considerable facilitations in the laborious ceremonies of prayer and pilgrimage, with a general tendency, not unlike that of the Roman Catholic Liguori, to relax whatever was severe, and soften whatever was harsh in theory as in practice, all characterise his teaching. At the same time, in obedience to a well-known psychological law, the easiest-going of divines was—Liguori-like again—the most superstitious. Omens and auguries, dreams and amulets, the observance of lucky days, and the annual visitation of tombs, these and more of their kind found favour in the eyes of Aboo-Ḥaneefah; while his dervish-like austerity of life, and his avowed claim to no less than a hundred visionary admittances within the celestial regions, revealed the great Doctor's personal leanings, and encouraged that fanciful asceticism which in Islam no less than in Christianity has proved an outgrowth from, if not a corruption of, its original simplicity.

Naturally enough the double trunk bore in due time double fruit, and the Turkish Ḥanefee, even while holding fast enough, in Cameronian phrase, 'the root of the matter,' has been of all times notorious for his proclivity now to the too much, and now to the too little; sometimes lax, sometimes observant in excess. Specimens of either kind abound in all professions and

modes of life throughout the Empire; but in some categories the one, in some the other, is more frequent. However, the former, or lax type, is most often to be met with in the Civil Service, our first field of inspection, and which has had the honour, more than all the rest, of producing that peculiar being commonly designated by the epithet of 'Stamboollee,' or 'Constantinopolitan,' to which derivative the title 'Effendee,' a word equivalent in meaning to our 'Mr.,' but now-a-days of a semi-official character, is liberally added. Let him come forward and speak for himself.

He is easily recognised; for besides his individual frequency, especially since the publication of the last new 'Tashkeelat,' or Regulations, he is the first, and not rarely the only, Mahometan whose acquaintance is made by the European traveller or resident. Whether our 'Stamboollee' bears the rank of Effendee, of Beg, or of Pasha, matters little. The same loose black frock-coat, black trousers, generally unbuttoned just where European ideas would most rigorously exact buttoning, the same padded underclothes, shiny boots, and slight red cap, the same sallow puffy features, indicative of an unhealthy regimen, the same shuffling gait and lack-lustre eye, characterise every man of the tribe:—

> Facies non omnibus una,
> Nec diversa tamen.

Let us follow our Effendee's career from the day when his father first held him up, a swathed infant, with his face towards the 'Kibleh,' and thrice pronounced the Mehemet, Osman, or Ahmed, by which our hero is to be known in after life. We may, however, omit the gutter-playing period of existence, that almost indispensable preface to every Eastern biogra-

phy, be it gentle or simple; and pass lightly over the four, five, or six years at the Mekteb, or Grammar School, where, however, the young idea learns, not grammar, but the first rudiments of reading *minus* spelling, and of writing *minus* caligraphy, besides a certain number of the shorter 'Soorahs,' or chapters of the Koran, consigned to sheer mechanical memory, without so much as an attempt to form any notion of the meaning. Issuing with these acquirements from the 'Mekteb,' he passes another half-dozen years chiefly under his father's roof, alternating between the 'Salāmlik' of hourly visitors, and the secluded apartments of the Harem; while day by day the spoilt child grows gradually up into a spoilt boy; humoured in every whim by a fond and foolish mother, a fond and not overwise father, and servants whose intimacy supplies timely lessons of vice and roguery, while their obsequiousness promotes not less efficaciously his growth in insolence and self-will. Of general knowledge, of moral and mental discipline, of self-restraint and self-respect, of the dignity of work, the bond of duty, the life of honourable deed, he learns nothing; these are growths all too strange to the climate of his rearing. Besides the parents and servants already mentioned is some poorly-paid, salary-snatching 'Khojah,' or private tutor, under whose instruction he attains a fairly good handwriting, a parrot-knowledge of 'Nahoo,' or grammar, that is, of Arab grammar, wholly alien in its principles, and mostly alien in its application, from whatever is Turkish, Tatar, or Turanian, Mr. Ferguson might say, in the vernacular language. To this he may, perhaps, add a no less parrot-smattering of Arab and Persian literature. Occasional attendance at a 'Mekteb Rushdee,' or 'School of guidance,' by which name the higher-class establishments of public education are designated,

will probably have coated over his intellectual store with a superficial varnish of French. Of history, geography, mathematics, and positive sciences, as of English, German, or any other European tongue, except the all-supplementing French, he is, and will for all his life, remain blissfully ignorant. But in cigarette-smoking, in gambling, probably in vice, perhaps in drinking, and certainly in the arts of lounging and time-wasting, he is already a creditable proficient, almost a master. If learning only went by contraries, he might have further acquired the science of economy from the paternal housekeeping, truthfulness and honour from the 'Khizmetkars' and 'Chibookjees' (house-servants and pipe-bearers), his earliest and closest associates, diligence from the lads of his own age and standing at school and in the street, and job-hating probity from the French and Levantine examples held up to his admiration as pattern types of civilisation and progress.

Needs not track our hero minutely through the various phases of his after career, which we will suppose an upward one, in service and in salary. But whether his ultimate apotheosis rank him among the 'Musheers,' or privy-councillors, those first magnitude stars of the Ottoman Empire, or whether deficiency of patronage and of purse detain him in the dim nebula of 'Kateebs,' or Government clerks; whether his lines be cast among the 'Mudeerliks' and 'Ḳaimmaḳamliks' (local prefectures) of some distant half-barbarous province, or fall in pleasant places under the immediate shadow (the broiling sun we should rather say) of the august 'Kapoo' or Constantinople Downing Street itself, the man is still the same. At twenty, at eighteen, at sixteen even, his character was formed for life. The intellectual coating, thinner or thicker, which French professors,

and a certain amount of contact with Gallo- or Italo-Levantine associates may have given, will indeed rub off; his cosmical science will return to, or sink below, the level of El-Mas'udee; his historical store shrink within the limits of the 'Mustedrif' or the 'Nowadir Soheylee,' at best; and so forth. But moral modifications are more quickly wrought, and, in the average of things, more firmly retained, than intellectual. Hence our 'Stamboollee' will all his life long be ready, occasion given, to put in practice the lessons taught in the school whence his real tutors issued, the royal law of which patronage is the first table, and dishonesty the second. 'Alla Franga' has been the motto of his youth, it will be the guide of his advancing years. But what 'Alla Franga!' His notions of family life, of social intercourse, of general morality, will be a reflex of George Sand and of Balzac; his notions of probity, political or monetary, of the Savoy and Jecker transactions; his notions of finance will be borrowed from Khaviar-Khan, the Bourse of Galata; his notions of statesmanship from the charlatanism of Pera, and the expediencies of the day. Of old Turkish courage, Turkish honour, Turkish decorum, scarce a trace, if even a trace, will remain. A Turkish Pasha afraid to mount a horse, a high-titled Osmanlee jobbing Government lands and public works to the profit of his own pocket, a Beg the son of Begs openly drinking 'rakee' in a street-side tavern among Greek and Armenian rabble—things little dreamt of by the Sokollis and Köprilees of former times—are now not uncommon, are now of daily occurrence, but among the Stamboollee tribe.

The prospects of Islam if confided to the sole guardianship of such as these may easily be guessed. Lifeless, spiritless, regardless of everything except the

most trifling amusements, the meanest self-interest, the coarsest pleasures, with all the apathetic negligence of the degenerate Turk, united to all the frivolous immorality of the degenerate Perote Levantine; without public spirit, without patriotism, without nationality; what place can the law of the austere 'Omar, the intrepid Khalid, the generous Mu'awiah, the energetic Ma'moon find in such breasts? How should minds like these apprehend the stern, unchanging unity of the all-ordaining, all-regulating Deity of Islam, the *operosus nimis Deus*, whom even Cicero recoiled from? or how entertain one spark of the single-minded enthusiasm of the soldier-Prophet, who, having subdued an entire nation to his will, and founded an empire scarcely less vast but more lasting than that of the Cæsars, left not in death wherewithal to give his own body a decent burial?

In fact, were the type of modern Mahometanism and the presage of its destinies to be sought in this class, and among these men, we might here lay aside our task, leave our friends and readers to draw their own conclusions, and for our own part subscribe to the nearest date at which—his Infallible Holiness, let us say—may choose to fix the doomsday of Islam. But this would be, in French phrase, a 'massive error,' though it is the very one to which Europeans, official even, are prone, led astray by the identical circumstance which has led us to place our 'Stamboollee' in the vanguard of the Mahometan procession, namely, his bad prominence rather than eminence. The first glance at a pool rests chiefly on the scum of the surface; the first object that comes into view on a steeple is the weathercock. 'Stamboollees' are but the scum of the pseudo-centralisation of that very dirty pool, the capital, of the varnish civilisation of Beg-

Ogloo; they are the weathercock, an ominous one undoubtedly, but indicative only of the Westerly breeze that for some years past, sweeping over the Bosporus and the Ægean, is now awakening a yet stronger counterblast of Easterly antagonism.

But before gladly dismissing them, to pass on to other classes in the long catalogue yet before us, let us add a word to anticipate a second error that some might fall into, imagining the unlovely portrait just drawn to be so far a family one that it might stand at random for any member whatever of the present Ottoman Civil Service. It is not so. That the 'Kalam,' or civil staff of the Porte, has much too large a proportion of the men above described we cannot deny; but it contains also in its ranks, both upper and lower, numerous individuals of a very different stamp,—men whose souls know what it is to have a cause, and whose cause is their duty and their country; men of the old sturdy Osmanlee caste, not wholly unadorned by European acquirements; men who, in Cromwell's words, 'bring a conscience to their work,' and whose conscience is that of Islam. But it is not among the 'Stambool-Effendee' latter-day creation, among the selfish, the frivolous, the emasculate set of those whose sham-Europeanism blossoms in the atmosphere of Mabille and 'cafés chantants,' of gambling-rooms and third-class theatres, that we must look for specimens of this better, and in the Civil Service, we say it with regret, this rarer type. They are plants of another soil; the offspring of classes which will claim our attention further on. But they are also less prominent from a stranger's point of view; a European may pass months and even years in Turkey, and yet rarely come across these men, or recognise them when he does. The others readily, and, as it

were, by a kind of prescriptive right, obtrude themselves on his notice, and form the staple material of his opinions and judgments. On these, with their stereotyped phrases of borrowed French about civilisation, progress, and so forth, he is apt to build alike his hopes for Turkey and his prognostics of the evanescence of Islam—hopes and prognostics which, to be themselves firm, should rest on a deeper and wider basis than the ephemeral Stamboollee clique, or even the administration of which it forms a part. Any given bureaucracy is a page easily turned over in the history of an empire.

'The sword is a surer argument than books,' sang, in the third century of Islam, its great poet Habeeb et-Tai'ee; and eminent as undoubtedly were the administrative qualities which for so many lustres gave the tribe of Osman the ascendency over the countless races that bowed to their dominion, yet the sword has always been their first boast and their ultimate reliance. Nor even now that the Janissaries have reddened the annals of the past with their blood, and the very names of Sipahees, Segbans, Akinjees, Lewends, and Günellees are almost forgotten, now that the breech-loader and the rifled cannon have supplanted the horse-tails and lances of Varna and Mohacs; while annual conscription and the European discipline of the Nizam, or standing army, have replaced the fierce charge of the irregular cavalry, and the fantastic varieties of tributary and provincial troops; not even now has the Osmanlee sabre wholly lost its edge, or is it less than of old the ready servant of the 'Ghazoo,' the Holy War of Islam.

During and after the Crimean war it was a common fashion to speak slightingly, sneeringly even, of the Turkish army and soldiery, and of the part they took

in the great struggle; and although this tone was more marked in the leaders and among the correspondents of the European Daily Press than among those actively present on the scene, yet even in many of the Europeans there concerned, some of them high in rank and command, there was a fixed disposition to consider the Osmanlee troops, army or navy, as mere cannon's meat, a half-organised, poor-spirited, unsoldierly rabble, deficient alike in discipline and courage. How far such an idea was true, or rather how far it was from all truth, Admiral Slade's faithful and unprejudiced narrative might alone suffice to show. And we may safely add, that not only they who, like the gallant admiral, were themselves art and part of the Turkish force, but those also who, present under other colours, had the best opportunities for observing with eyes undazzled by national self-glorification, and of hearing with ears undeafened by national self-applause, came to no dissimilar conclusion from his. And, perhaps, should a veracious account, not one cooked up by Greek dragomans and Levantine consular agents, of the late Cretan war, ever find its way to Europe, it might prove a fair appendix to Slade's *Crimean War*, in spite of Mr. Skinner and the Piræan telegraph.

But, meanwhile, leaving the historical field, where party spirit too often fights the battles o'er again in ink, with scarce less animosity than they were first fought in blood, we will have recourse to present observation; and in the study of the materials which compose the existing Turkish army, seek a clue to a tolerable estimate of the military class itself, officers and soldiers; after which we may judge what are the justifiable hopes or fears of Islam in this quarter.

Born and bred on some green hill-side, in a wretched

single-roomed cottage, our Turkish lad, after years of hoeing and reaping, sheep-tending, donkey-driving, wood-cutting, or charcoal-burning, as the case may be, arrives at the age of twenty, or near it. One day he is summoned from his village, along with a dozen other youths of his class, to the ballot-urn of the conscription, and his lot is cast with the army for the next five years at least, probably more. Finding himself thus suddenly on the point of being separated, perhaps without hope of return, from the almost destitute family of which he is the principal if not the only stay, our raw recruit mingles his tears and entreaties for exemption with those of his younger brothers and sisters, his aged mother, and his anxious, almost despairing relatives. But all is of no avail; so he and his say in joint resignation their 'kismet' or 'God's allotment,' and Ahmed takes his place among the ragged crowd of his fellow recruits, in accoutrement and guise more scarecrow than any of Falstaff's corps at Coventry; in warlike spirit, a chance observer might think, a fit companion for a Mouldy or a Bullcalf.

Six months later we enquire in the 101st Regiment after our tattered, weeping peasant. Summoned by the 'cha'oush,' or sergeant, Ahmed answers the call; but how different from his former self on the ballot day! Light work, good food, comfortable lodgings—all these, relatively, of course, to what he was accustomed to in his koïlee or peasant stage of existence, have reddened his cheeks, filled out his limbs, and lighted up his once-dull eye; a system of drill that would hardly, perhaps, pass muster at Aldershot, but which has all the practical advantages that even a R.H. Commander-in-Chief should take into account; a practical though coarse uniform, sadly deficient, we

allow, in the ingenious Western devices of bear-skins, shoulder-straps, and heart-disease, but not, perhaps, the worse for that after all, have done their work, and transformed every movement, gait, and bearing of the clown into those of the soldier. Add, that his drill and discipline have, so far as they go, been acquired under the tutorage of a corporal whose demeanour towards him has been that of an elder to a younger brother, and beneath the eye of officers with whom kindness to their men is the rule, harshness the occasional and rare exception. Democratic, communistic, as is by nature every Turk, he is doubly so in military life—round, in the old Osmanlee phrase, one caldron, under, in the more refined language of our time, one standard. Hence throughout the Turkish army distinctions of rank are, when off duty, frequently laid aside to a degree that would startle, and justly so, a European officer, who would, for his part, have good reason to fear the contempt bred of familiarity. Of this, however, among Eastern soldiery the danger, unless provoked by intrinsically degrading conduct, is very slight. The professional fellow-feeling which binds soldiers most of all men together is here not only broad but deep, and not only pervades rank and file, but passes upwards and downwards alike, from the general to the bandsman.

But to return to our recruit. If sick he has been tended in a good bed by doctors, less learned, perhaps, than those of a Paris hospital, but also, it may be, less often unfeeling or negligent, while his hours of illness have been cheered by the easily-admitted visits of his comrades, possibly more than once of his lieutenant or captain. In barrack-quarters he has learnt orderly and cleanly habits, not, indeed, of pipeclay severity, but amply sufficient to the service and the climate, while at

all times the camp discipline, however strict in essentials, has been what in Europe would be called easy-going, almost to laxness in details. In a word, the man has been made comfortable mentally no less than physically, and he requites those who have made him so by willing obedience, and a respect no less real because tempered by the confidence of attachment. At any rate, no Turkish guard-room rings to the sound of a musket discharged against an officer's head, or through the bearer's own heart; no sergeant need fear the finding himself at a lonely corner with any private of the regiment, however armed; and no soldier leaves behind him the 'in memoriam' that the conduct of his captain or his colonel has driven him to despair.

To this fortunate equilibrium of individual freedom and regimental subordination, or rather to the formation of the temperament which allows and maintains it, many causes have concurred, but none more so than that one dictum of the Prophet's, 'Surely fermented liquor is a snare of the devil; avoid it if you hope to prosper.' Pity almost that our Western code should be less stringent in this particular; its observance would materially benefit our soldiers, and our soldiers' wives and children too, let alone others. In fact, how much evil and misery this single prohibitory warning, attended to in the main, has averted from lands which would else have been very wretched, those are well aware who have have had the opportunity of contrasting an East-end Christmas or a Liverpool Saturday-night with a Mahometan 'Beyram' or festival-day at Damascus, for example, or in Stambool itself (Pera and Galata always excepted). But it is in the army, above all, that the ill effects of strong drink, and, by contrast, the good effects of its absence, are most clearly seen, and justify the foresight of him who sought above all to train up a nation

of fighting-men; and the temperance precept of the Koran is in general as faithfully observed by the Mahometan soldier as it is habitually violated by the black-coated Effendee. But with the military jacket the Osmanlee puts on also the mantle of zeal dropped by the Prophet on his best followers; and in this zeal, whether we stigmatize it under the name of fanaticism, or decorate it as patriotic enthusiasm, lies the true secret of the strength of that young-old army; hence its endurance, its stubborn courage; hence its daring when worthily led, its amazing patience when neglected and thrown away. The fire of Islam may have been covered, seemingly choked, under the ashes of poverty and care, while the future soldiers were yet in their village homes; once within roll-call the ashes are blown away, and the flame bursts forth bright as ever. Witness the annals of the army of the Danube in 1854 and 1855; witness what gleams of military truth have pierced the veil cast by partisanship and misrepresentation over the campaigns of Montenegro and Candia; we ourselves may yet live to witness more.

Sober, patient, obedient, cheerful, indifferent to danger, ready for death, and a thorough-going Mahometan in heart and practice, such is the average Turkish private. And the officers? It was till lately a common saying that in the Ottoman army the men were better than the officers by as much as in the Russian army the officers were better than the men. With all due allowance for the inaccuracy of generalisations, there is even now some truth in this one—there was formerly much more. Nor could it, indeed, be otherwise, in what concerns the Turks at least. To form an officer, still more to form a corps of officers, possessing the requisite amount of technical knowledge, perfected by apt experience and animated by the true military spirit, is a

much slower work than to call together a body of recruits and equip them with kit and musket. Mahmood II. could do the latter by an act of his will; he could not do the former; time alone could. And time is already fast doing it. Forty years since the shameful treaty of Adrianople, thirteen years of comparative leisure since the equivocal advantages of the Paris settlement, have indeed been little better than thrown away on the self-satisfied, French-phraseologising, irresponsible, irreformable 'Kalam' or civil service. They have not been thrown away on the 'Kileej,' the sword, the army. Even now we recognise the hope-giving results of preliminary instruction and examination, of promotion accorded more to merit and seniority, and less to backstairs intrigue and vizierial favour; of active service in the case of some, of long camp life with others, and, in all, the energetic rivalry natural to men who, while filling a post to which they feel belong of right the highest honours of the empire, yet find themselves sunk by the present order of things into a second and subordinate category; men capable of command, born soldiers and trained officers; men too, with but few exceptions, rarer and more anomalous every day, staunch Islam as any of the soldiers in their ranks.

Closely connected with this is another feature of the Ottoman army, which, rightly considered, bears strong witness to the intensity of its Mahometanism, we mean the general absence of that systematic peculation and corruption which so widely pervade the civil service. Since the day when the Vizier Shemsee Pasha avenged, such was his spiteful boast, the downfall of his ancestors, the Kizil-Ahmedlees, on the Ottoman dynasty, by inoculating the latter with the corruption which he himself derived, if tradition says true, from his great but greedy forefather Khalid Ebn-Waleed, bribery

and peculation, now direct and barefaced, now disguised under the decent names of 'Bakhsheesh,' i.e. present, or 'Iltimās,' i.e. favour, have been the dry rot of the Turkish fabric in its almost every joist and beam. In the military, and in the military service alone, they rarely find place. True, the minute overhauling of accounts, regimental or other, which has wisely been established in the Ottoman army, renders dishonest dealing less facile there than elsewhere; but no control could long be efficacious were it not sustained and verified by a general spirit above unworthy doings, an honour disdainful of profitable stain. This spirit was that of 'Omar, of Aboo-Bikr, of Mahomet himself. The 'proud Moslem,' the 'bearded Turk that rarely deigns to speak,' and many similar phrases have become in a manner stereotyped from frequent use, and to a certain extent they represent a truth. 'No higher nobility than Islam,' says the three-foot character inscription over the main entrance of our chief mosque at Fatimahpolis; and it is when enrolled in the ranks of the army that the Muslim thoroughly feels himself a Muslim, and acts accordingly. In the bureau and on the market-place his associations are different, and so, but too often, are his dealings also. But be he Turk or Arab, Negro or Circassian, his normal standing-ground is the camp, his truest name a soldier, and the whole honour of his heart and being is in each. 'My foot is on my native heath, and my name is MacGregor,' is but a feeble counterpart of the 'Allaho-Akbar,' 'God and victory,' of the Mahometan onslaught.

Meanwhile, earnestness gives stability, and in time of peace no men can be more orderly, more amenable, not to military discipline only, but to the customary restraints of law and society, than Turkish soldiers. The fact, from its very generality, passes without comment. Thus it is only a few weeks since that we have seen

four thousand men who, after many weary weeks of hot autumn march from the interior across mountains rivalling the Pyrenees in height, were shipped off much after the fashion of cattle from Hamburg, or negroes from Zanzibar, to make part of the imperial holiday for the crowned quidnuncs of Europe on the Bosporus, and have now been once more disembarked in this our roadstead of Fatimahpolis, here to wait days and weeks till the intervals of winter-storm may permit them to recross the mountain wall home again. Market, street, lane, square, beach, fountain-head—all Turkish towns abound in fountain-heads, often tastefully sculptured—every place, in short, is thronged by soldiers, each with the gratuity that French and Austrian liberality or decency has bestowed, no insignificant sum for a peasant youngster to carry about with him at his own disposal. Yet not a single extra case is brought before the police courts, not a voice of quarrel or complaint is to be heard in the street; the few officers who accompany the men may sit unanxious and undisturbed in the coffee-houses; evening after evening passes off quiet and orderly into the unbroken silence of an Eastern night; morning dawns, and if the shops and baths are crowded, the mosques are not less so; not one of the four thousand but turns to Mecca five times a day, in witness to the unity of God and the mission of the Prophet.

The Russian soldiers before Silistria, or beleaguered in Sebastopol, were undoubtedly devoted to their Emperor, and zealous for the great orthodox faith. Yet their zeal and devotion required to be moistened with extra libations of Vodka, and fostered in the hot-house atmosphere of fictitious weeping Theotokoi, and underground communications affirmed and believed in with Petersburg and Paradise. The French army adored Napoleon the Conqueror, and was jealous even to slaying

for the honour of 'la grande nation;' but for them, too, the stimulant of forty ages had to be invoked from the top of the Pyramids, and promised plunder did much before Moscow. The British troops stood their ground heroically at Waterloo, but then they had a Wellington at their head. Unliquored, unstimulated, unharangued, too often it has been unofficered, the Ottoman soldier has gone unhesitating to the death which gave new life to his empire in the days of Catherine and of Nicholas. And the sword of Islam, though rusted, has not lost its virtue.

So far of the Turkish uniform, civil and military, and of the hopes thereby given to Mahometanism; much from the military, little, if truth must be said, from the civil. Yet the future, after all, lies in the great masses, Arab, Koorde, Turk, Turkoman, and Syrian, of the Eastern empire.

These masses are chiefly agricultural, owners or cultivators of the soil, and it is for that reason that we have assigned to the landed proprietors, taken in conjunction with the peasants around them, the priority of order over the two remaining classes, namely, the commercial and the learned, or legal. Manufacturing interest, properly speaking, is, our readers know, none in Turkey; whatever manufacturing skill formerly existed and even, to a certain extent, flourished, having been long since smothered well-nigh to death under the bales of printed Manchesters and other products of European machinery that every steamer throws on these coasts. The artificers and craftsmen who yet survive will find place along with other townsmen in general, when we call before us, in due place, the commercial or trading class. But the deep and wide base of the Mahometan Levant is agricultural industry, and it merits attentive consideration.

Landowners in all countries and at all times have been, as a rule, and still are, conservative, the earth they are possessors of seeming on its side to impart something of its own immobility to their character. Besides, men who inherit a position titled for generations, and dwellings and domains where their 'fore-gangers' have kinged it, perhaps for centuries, are, and not unnaturally, inclined to look down with a certain contempt, if not dislike, on recent dignities and acquisitions of comparatively ephemeral date. Such men when assumed into the body of a government give it a special solidity of character, for good as for evil. When they alone form a government it speedily passes, by petrifactive degeneration, into a Spartan oligarchy, or a Hohen Eulen-Schreckenstein principality.

Now it is a peculiar feature of modern Turkey, and one which essentially distinguishes it from its former self, that the landed classes, once so intimately blended with the military, and together all-powerful in the empire, are now carefully and systematically excluded from any share whatsoever in the government. Read over the long muster list of pashas and effendees, viziers and musheers of the present day, and you will hardly find among them one in thirty who owes a name, an acre of land, or any title of recognised existence to his grandfather. With exceptions far too few to be of any weight, these officials are all men of yesterday, writers, Chibookjees, 'id genus omne,' raised by favour, by money, by intrigue, by what you will (birth and hereditary estate excepted) to their present position. The son of a grand-vizier or of a musheer-pasha, who was himself, perhaps, the son of a house-servant or a coffee-shop keeper, is a very Stanley or Vere de Vere among them. And this, to give the tribe a retrospective glance, is one reason, and not the least either, why

conservative principles are so rare among them. As well expect such from the speculators of the Bourse, or the managers of the Suez Canal.

This is the work of the too-famous reforms, or 'Tanzeemat,' which, under the Sultans Mahmood II. and 'Abdul-Mejeed, levelled in the dust the old aristocracy of Turkey, and made of the empire a *tabula rasa* whereon Harem-Sultans and irresponsible ministers might inscribe at will their caprices, to the multiplication of Bosporus palaces and the desolation of villages and provinces. 'The Sultan has laid waste an empire to raise himself a town,' said not long since a Persian envoy at the Porte, and, though a Persian, said true. For fifty years the French-imported word 'centralisation' has been the motto of Stambool policy, and the first letter in its alphabet is the suppression of provincial existence by the weakening and abasement of the landed proprietors.

Excluded from the official circles where government means gambling, with a weathercock for its banner, the conservative spirit has taken refuge among the agricultural population, landowners and peasants, much as what is sometimes called the fanatical, and might more properly be entitled the national or imperial, spirit has concentrated itself in the military and learned classes, the Begs and the 'Ulemah. Though not identical, the conservative and the national spirit are here in close connection, and together constitute a force that, gathering intensity from the very fact of long repression, may some day culminate in an earthquake that— But we are venturing into the bottomless gulf of future and prophecy; let us make haste and draw back our foot to the solid ground of fact and present.

So to horse, to horse, since Asiatic railroads exist as yet in concessions only, and carriage-ways are repre-

sented by the shortest possible 'stria' from the coast inland, and, with an outrider in front, and a baggage-horse with a servant or two behind, let us set out on our country visits for the interior of Syria, Anatolia, 'Irak, or where you will, from the murky waters of the Black Sea (odious pool!) to the glittering sands of Ghazzeh and the Syro-Egyptian frontier. Let the season of our rovings be the late spring or the early autumn. Winter travelling is always unpleasant, and we had rather, with all respect, be excused the honour of being thy companion here, O British reader, when the suns of July and August are overhead. Spring, then, be it, or autumn. We have already made some hours of road, and, after the noon-day halt, under the shelter of a tree, or nestling up against the narrow strip of shadow afforded by chance wall or rock, we remount our beasts and gaze forward over a wide horizon of plain and valley, winding river-line, and endless mountain chain, unable to distinguish among the grey dust-haze of the distance even the faintest indication of the resting-place promised us by our guides and attendants for the evening. After repeated enquiry and much straining of eyesight, a darkish speck on the third, at nearest, of three bluish ridges will probably be pointed out, with the further indication of a name that, after hearing half-a-dozen times repeated, we give up in despair. But the gist of the matter is, that in the village with the unpronounceable name, or close by it, lives some Tahir-Oghloo Beg, Kara-Ibraheem-Oghloo Beg, Hasan Agha es-Soweydanee Adhem Beg, as the case may be. Of this gentleman, whatever be his personal designation, we next joyfully learn that he is a '*Kh*aneh-dan' or landed proprietor, that he has a large house always open to guests, and, better still, that he himself is 'adablee,' well-mannered,

'kereem,' hospitable, and so forth, which being paraphrased into Eastern fact means that the house-roof is a wide one and covers plenty of spare room, that it shelters, too, an indefinite number of hangers-on for our own followers to gossip with, that rice and grease are plenty in the kitchen, and that there is a large supply of dirty coverlets ready for the night. By such attractions you are violently drawn, or if you are not, your attendants are (which in the East is all one), towards the hospitable loadstone, and on you jog through sun and dust.

An hour or so before sunset, after much weariness and many premature hopes of a speedy arrival at the village in question, which your guides for the last three hours at least have invariably stated to be at exactly one hour's distance—you find yourself among the homebound kine, and accompanying peasants of the locality; you thread five or six huge unprofitable manure heaps, hardened into hillocks of respectable age, and several cottages of earth and rubble, placed anyhow; till, horse and man, you draw up at the entrance of a huge straggling building, with an amazing number of windows; a wonder no Stambool finance minister has yet thought of taxing them. Those on one side are latticed, and behind those latticed windows lives or live the Beg's lady or ladies, who will have the satisfaction of preparing your evening repast with her or their own fair hands, but to whom you are of course much too well-bred to expect a personal introduction. The windows on the other side are in a state of unmodified openness, without shutters, frames, or any other appendages. You have, according to custom, sent on a fore-rider to announce your coming, and have in consequence been met outside the hamlet by the Beg himself, or, more probably, by the Beg's son or cousin, with some others

of his set: while at the entrance door of the dwelling has already congregated a whole crowd of peasants, partly from respect, partly also from curiosity. Like the old French 'propriétaires,' and unlike their less sociable English brethren, Turkish and Arab landowners always fix their residence in the midst, or, at least, close to the very entrance of the principal village they are or were lords of. Close by the portal stand three or four figures clad in long loose cloth robes, blue or green, trimmed with cheap furs, which, though their best, have evidently seen much service; and the bearded and turbaned wearers greet you respectfully but briefly, addressing their main conversation, question and answer, to your servants. The truth is, that till you have spoken they seldom give you credit for a knowledge of the vernacular. A tall young fellow now steps up and holds the bridle of your horse while you alight. Hardly have your feet touched the ground when you are surrounded by the members present of your host's family, brothers, uncles, cousins, &c., and led quickly indoors up a most ancient and perhaps half-rotten staircase of wood. Safely landed at the top you find yourself in a large room, on either side of which the floor is slightly raised along a breadth of about three feet from the wall, and divided off from the central depression which leads to the great open fireplace at the upper end by a row of wooden pillars, forming a double arcade, slightly but tastefully carved. A similar arcade runs across the hall near its lower end and shuts off that portion of the apartment into a kind of ante-chamber, where servants and the like constantly throng on duty and off duty, to gaze at or minister to the guests.

The centre passage is bare, or at best laid down with brownish felt; but the double estrade on either side is carpeted with gaily-striped Kurdish druggets

or the motley-coloured work of Keer-Shahr or Yuzgat, the original of the much imitated Turkey carpet; while the side furthest from the entrance is the more richly decorated, and its upper end, on the left of the huge smoky fireplace, is crowded with cushions, piled up against the wall, sometimes two and three deep. Here you are invited to take your seat, which, however, if you are thoroughly well-mannered, you defer doing till you have beckoned your faithful follower, Sa'eed or Rihan, to pull off your travel-soiled boots, an office in which possibly some one of your entertainers may with courteous *empressement* anticipate the menial. After which you half tuck your legs up with an air of graceful weariness, arrange the cushions comfortably to your elbow, and thus reclining, somewhat between the dignified and the easy, await the opening enquiries of conversation. N.B.—Never when a guest open the discourse yourself. Meanwhile, the master of the house and land, the 'Khaneh-dan' himself, becomes distinguishable from relatives and connections, with whom you have, probably, thus far confounded him, by the fact of his taking, but in a deferential and 'by your leave' manner, the place next you, though considerably lower, and modestly contenting himself with one cushion. Relatives or intimate friends, local grandees, arrange themselves opposite or on a line still further down; retainers and their kind stand below or busy themselves in preparing the stereotyped refreshments of immediate requisition, sherbets and coffee; others have disappeared to commence the necessary preliminaries of supper, the measure for which has been already taken on the news gleaned regarding you from your outrider and domestics, partly too from your own personal appearance at first sight; all will, without further notice, be ready some two hours later. That

your horses be well looked after and your luggage safely stowed away is your servants' care; they are not worth their salt if they do not see to that without prompting, and you are not worth yours if your servants be not attentive and faithful in these countries.

Salutations given and returned, follow questionings as to your whence and whither (not the great 'whence' and 'whither,' regarding neither of which any true Mahometan ever felt the anxieties of doubtful conjecture, but the more proximate ones of your actual journey); questions, however, put courteously and in a round-about manner. You will do well to answer plainly, but with the quiet unconcern of a man who feels himself, his ways, and doings, to be above comment as above interference. And here let us presume on experience so far as to give a hint of 'etiquette' to our lively French brother travellers, our energetic English, and our busy, laborious German investigators. When received as a guest among Mahometans, whether Turks, Arabs, or Koordes, be ready to speak when called on, but never show forwardness or desire of talk; be respectful in demeanour to the master of the house, and civilly cool to all the rest; be careful, above all, of your own decorum; take your ease easily, and yet have somewhat an air of holding back; never, if possible, notice a deficiency in attentions, material or other, at the time, yet never pass it over altogether and as if unperceived when occasion offers later on; if you absolutely require anything which happens not to be close at hand, call for it as quietly and simply as if the house were your own; in a word, reconcile in your conduct the two opposite adages of the Levant, 'A guest is a king,' and 'A guest should be modest.' If in addition to all this you can conveniently, and at an early date of the interview, show that you are

fairly well acquainted with provincial antecedents, ways and doings, and with the Ottoman East in general, so much the better.

Our host meanwhile is somewhat reserved, too, on his side, not feeling sufficiently sure of the dispositions and intentions of his visitors. He keeps to generalities, or asks questions of no great import. But a casual sneer which escapes him when the name of some Constantinople luminary or some neighbouring Stamboollee official is mentioned in the course of conversation, perhaps a disparaging comment on some late measure of police or taxation, soon reveals the habitual direction of his thought, and it requires little skill to draw him out in full character, grievances and all.

By a firman, stamped with the autograph seal of Suleyman the Great, Seleem the Conqueror, or Murad the Terrible, the ancestral Beg, a Janissary perhaps, a Lewend, an Akinjee, or under whatever title and banner he may have been numbered among the then invincible army, received in perpetual gift to himself and his heirs this very village and land. Up to the crest of yonder range, down to the rapid brook in yon distant valley, far as the skirts of that dwarf-oak forest opposite, all was his—soil, villages, rights, dues, pasture, timber—in requital for deeds of daring done in Hungary or Bosnia, at Mohacs or before Ofen, and in consideration of future services proportioned to the amplitude of this his first reward. A gift imperial in its character, and in the donor's intention, partaking of the stability of the empire itself which the Sipahee's prowess had aided to confirm or extend. Here, accordingly, his campaigning over, the soldier-noble lived on his estate, practically a Pasha, a Sultan, for those around him: the peasants tilled his lands and handed him over a lion's share of the produce; others were

his attendants, his irregular soldiery, his local guard; all rendered him prompt obedience and feudal duty, repaid by liberality, protection, and often maintenance. Few and far between were his or their communications with Stambool, except it were to send some occasional remittance, more in the form of a present than of a due; or to answer to the call of military service when Austria threatened the Western frontiers, or Cossack marauders broke in too often on the north. Taking all in all, the yearly state contributions of landlord and tenants amounted to about one in forty, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; nor were the local burdens of the semi-serfs much heavier. In fine, Kara-Ibraheem, or whatever was the name of the Sipahee family-founder, had a good time of it, and his tenants not a bad one.

Here, in like manner, but with a still increasing absolutism of independence, his heirs lorded it after him. Each and all registered in the chronicle of local memorials and events: this one by his exploits in Candia had merited a further extension of the hereditary demesnes; that one built the mosque close by, and inscribed his name on the portal; a third cast the causeway, now broken up and disjointed, over the adjoining marsh, or bridged the Kara-Soo torrent (half the streams in Turkey are Kara-Soo, i.e. 'black water') in the valley where the caravan road falls in from Diar-Bekr; a fourth erected the ogee-arched fountain by the road-side, and the 'Tekkeh,' or chapel of ease, under yon poplar group, where dwelt some dervish much reputed for Mahometan sanctity. In those days the peasantry on the lands amounted to three, four, five thousand families; a call of 'Jihad,' or Holy War (all Mahometan wars are 'holy,' on condition, so runs the orthodox comment, that the commencement of hostilities be on the other side), mustered two thousand

horsemen, armed and equipped for a visit to Tabreez or Belgrade as the case might be. The yoke of serfage was lighter, much lighter than ever it was in Europe and Russia; taxation, if taxation it could be called, was only occasional; and the gathered wealth of the peasantry remained to their own account or was repaid by an equivalent in local advantages; they too, indeed, were lords and proprietors of the land, not nominally but really. Meanwhile Christians and other heterogeneous unbelievers occupied a position in subservience and servility not unlike that of the Jews in mediæval Europe, or the Morescoes in later Spain; though deprived by Mahometan tolerance of those accompaniments of Inquisitions and martyrdoms, which enlivened heretic existence in Christian-Catholic countries. Our heterodox Easterns enjoyed, however, like the Jews of the Ghetto, two profitable monopolies; the one of contempt, which exempted them from military service, and the other of usury, which made up for the deprivation of a share in military plunder.

Alas! With the reforms of Sultan Mahmood II., and the fatal 'Tanzeemat,' or ordinances of Sultan 'Abd-ul-Mejeed, all these golden days and doings have come to an end. The firman has been cancelled by a stroke of the pen; the lands, nine-tenths of them, have been resumed by Government and sold off to the first buyers; the feudal rights that bound peasant to lord, and, not a little, lord to peasant, have been suppressed, abrogated: the very title of Beg, or nobleman, only survives by courtesy, but without authority, without official recognition or social advantage. Perhaps a life-annuity, equalling in value about one-twentieth of the confiscated property, was granted by way of compensation to the Beg of the epoch; but it has either been already buried with him, or only

lingers yet for a few months. As for the peasants, in place of the one piastre which they formerly paid to a resident and congenial master, who spent among them what he received from them, and provided bread, arms, and horses for the children out of the tillage-produce of the fathers, they now pay ten to a distant unsympathizing clique of unknown and unknowing Effendees in a far-off capital, and receive not a single benefit, direct or indirect, in return. They have indeed been permitted to purchase each his own plot of ground, and so far, an Irishman at least would opine, ought to be content at having passed *en masse* from tenantship to proprietorship. But tenant rights have at all times, as understood in Turkey, had all the main advantages and only half the responsibility of proprietorship; and taxation at its present scale speedily absorbs both the interest and the capital of the ground-purchase alike, till 'the land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof' is but an overtrue description of Turkey as regards her Mahometan peasants.

In fine, to hear our host, all are dissatisfied; the country gentry or nobility, call them which you will, at the loss of their estates, position, and power; the villagers in their exchange of a light yoke for a heavy one, and of occasional contributions to masters acquainted with every circumstance of the seasons and the crops, with the weakness no less than the strength of their vassals, with the wants as the means of every family and individual, for the unmodified, unyielding demands of a strange council board, where provincial circumstances and local variations are neither considered nor known; while every year increases the burden, and the back is broken before its loaders know so much as that it is even bent. 'Meanwhile,' concludes our Beg, 'the Christians'—alas! he too probably says 'the

Giaours' or infidels; but how do we ourselves in common parlance designate those whose religious tenets differ from our own?—'the Christians enjoy all imaginable favours and exemptions; their voice alone is heard, their complaint attended to; day by day they rise above us, buy up with the fruits of usury the land won of old by the sword and the bow of Islam; and, unsatisfied with equality, aim at avowed pre-eminence and rule.' And with a 'Fair patience! and God to help,' quoted from the never-failing Koran, he relapses into silence.

Has he said truth? Bating the exaggeration into which the 'laudator temporis acti' is always apt to run, his statement is true; and the deserted villages, ruined *k*hans, abandoned roads, broken bridges, and wide waste lands all around, are there to confirm it.

Now in the minds of these men, Begs and Aghas, who are still looked up to by the entire agricultural mass, that is by two-thirds of the Mahometan population, as their natural heads and chiefs, the idea of Islam, of the Koran, of the five daily prayers, of Ramadan, of Mecca and its pilgrimage, of God's Unity and Mahomet's mission, is more than part of, it is one and identical with the idea of those 'good old times' that they so deeply and not altogether unreasonably regret; with Ottoman supremacy and the glories of the Crescent, with wealth, honour, dominion; with all that men love or hope; with all that makes life worth the living. And, in their minds also, the present Government, the whole Stambool Effendee clique, with their reforms, loans, French civilisation, centralisation, and novel taxes, are no better than traitors to the Empire and to Islam: upstart intruders, whom they would gladly thrust out of place and power, gladly transfer, if they knew how, to the 'blessed'

plane-tree of At-Meidan, whose boughs so many an oppressive Vizier, a rapacious Defterdar, or a corrupt Muftee have adorned in former times—the 'lanterne' of old Stambool.

The sun has set; most of the company have already slipped away to their ablutions preparatory to evening prayers; the unmusical voice of the village Mu'eḍḍin is heard from the low mosque roof and wood-spired tower close by; the master of the house, with an apology, rises last; and for a quarter of an hour we prayerless infidels are left alone.

II.

MAHOMETANISM IN THE LEVANT—*Continued.*

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THAT the old landholders, that is, the entire birth-nobility of the Ottoman Empire, Turk, Arab, or other, are profoundly discontented with the present position of affairs, and would willingly restore—as above said—the gone-by supremacy of Islam and their own, is an incontestable fact. That the peasants, ground down as they now are by taxation, conscription, and all the tightening screws of a purely fiscal administration, which takes all it can and gives nothing in return, heartily sympathise with the old landholders, and, like them, see, or fancy they see, in a revival of Mahometanism the readiest remedy to the evils they suffer, is no less certain. And this very discontent, no less than education and custom, makes them cling all the more firmly to their creed, the one plank left them, so they deem, in the general shipwreck, and sink or swim they will not leave it. Eastern monotheism has a concentrated force that Western polytheism, however fair its legends and philosophic their meaning, never attained; the fealty there dispersed and diluted amongst many has here collected its entire strength in one. And, be it noted, change of religion implies to the Mahometan mind change of the Deity itself.

Prayers are now over, and our host returns with his retinue. Supper is spread with a copiousness unknown to the parsimonious Greek or even the more hospitable Armenian; and were the dishes a trifle less greasy, they would for the most part, though simple, be not unpalatable. Besides, pure air and a hard day's exercise have doubtless rendered us less fastidious than, it may be, we had imagined ourselves to be, and quantity, of which there is no scant, makes up for rustic deficiencies in quality. Conversation is resumed; and some chance remark on the date inscribed under a recess gaily painted in blue and red with an Arabic writing in its vicinity, brings in a new and copious topic of Eastern talk. For the niche indicates the 'Kibleh,' i.e. the direction of the Meccan 'Ka'abeh,' the centre of the Mahometan world; and hitherward, when want of leisure or other causes keep them away from the mosque, the faces of the household are turned many times a day in their private devotions. No Muslim house-interior is without this religious sign-post; indeed, the principal rooms are often constructed so that one side of the apartment may exactly face the proper direction. A workman, who, in an ordinary way, cannot be got to make two windows on a line in the same length of wall, or make level the floor of a room ten feet square, never fails to direct the 'Kibleh' niche with unerring exactness, and to find to a hair's-breadth the precise angle of the radius that points to Mecca. What love is to the world at large, that is Islam to the Eastern; it renders him architect, poet, metaphysician, carver, decorator, soldier, anything. Taught by Islam, men who even in the long-drilled regiment can never dress a line or form a square with tolerable correctness, range themselves in the most perfect rank and file at the hour of prayer; and clumsy peasants, very Hodges and Dobsons for awkwardness in

all else, go through the simultaneous prostrations and other accessories of their rite with a nicety that the best-trained seminarists of St. Sulpice, or the acolyte performers of St. Alban's, Holborn, can scarcely rival, never surpass. Every feature of the village tells the same tale. The cottages are the merest hovels—we here except Syria—half earth, half rubble; and no pretence, not to speak of ornament, but even of common symmetry and neatness, relieves their ugliness. Even the Beg's house is a clumsy barrack, sadly in need too of repair: its decorations are of the simplest and cheapest kind. But on the village mosque neat stone-work, subtle carving, elaborate art have all been lavished; here the injuries of time are immediately and accurately made good; here are to be found the best carpets, here the gayest colours, here the most scrupulous cleanliness. And it is worth our noting, while speaking of mosques, that the care bestowed upon them is not due to any notion of inherent sanctity or mysterious consecration affecting the place or the buildings themselves, such ideas being alien alike from the letter and the spirit of Islam: though abnormal superstition has in a few instances succeeded, however unauthorised and disavowed at large, in attaching such notion to a small number of localities. It is not the building, it is the religion itself, that they delight to honour; the dweller, not the house, that is the object of so respectful, and often, in regard of the means of the worshippers, so costly a veneration. All this does not look like an enfeebled or decaying system.

Meanwhile, the date of the 'Kibleh-Nameh,' or 'Miḥrab,' the Mecca-turned niche above mentioned, has led the conversation to that never-exhausted topic, Arabia and its ancient capital; the one spot on earth where Islam does to a certain extent hold the place it

stands on to be hallowed ground. What Jerusalem once was, and still, though in diminished measure, is to the Israelite, that, and perhaps even more, is Mecca to the Mahometan. Enormous as are the distances to be traversed, heavy as is the expense to be incurred, amounting often to 200*l.*, 300*l.*, and more, nothing can deter or diminish the yearly crowd of pilgrims, which later muster-rolls have indeed much surpassed any recorded of the preceding century. Increased facility of communication has no doubt a large share in this numerical augmentation; but more must be ascribed to the wide-spread Eastern revival of Mahometan zeal—a revival which itself owes much to that very facility of communication. Even among the remote villages and corners of the far-off land by which our imaginary journey is now leading us, Anatolia, Koordistan, or Armenia, two or three individuals are often to be found in a single hamlet who have thrown pebbles in the valley of Muna, passed the night upon the slopes of Muzdelifah, stood to worship on Jebel 'Arafat; compassed the Ka'abeh seven times, and kissed the black stone of celestial origin; while the rest of the population, old and young, are never weary of hearing tales about the pilgrimage, which many of them purpose one day to make in person, and descriptions of the sacred places which to visit is, to them, the highest privilege of life. In such and the like talk the evening wears on; the cry for night-prayers, about two hours after sunset, arrives; all Easterns are early sleepers, but Mahometans, whose morning devotions require matutinal rising, most so. Accordingly the house servants now bring from out the recesses of the Harem the mattresses and bedding destined for the guests of the night, while the company one after another take their leave, our host last.

Beds on the floor and fleas for bed-fellows are decidedly promoters of early rising, so we will make a virtue of necessity, and having got up with or before the sun, we will take a stroll through the village and look at the peasants, all also up betimes, before our horses are yet saddled and breakfast ready.

They are a primitive set, these villagers, coarse-featured, coarse-limbed, and coarsely clad. The strong family likeness prevalent among all those of the same district is doubtless partly due to ties of clanship, partly to the mere uniformity of a life confined to one narrow groove and diversified by no more remarkable incidents than a marriage just like all other marriages for two hundred miles round, or a funeral like all other funerals. Pilgrim-deputies excepted, by far the greater number never go beyond the limits of the land where they were born and bred, and where they pass their days in the most pattern agricultural monotony; each generation treading to the best of its ability exactly in the steps of that which went before it. Ploughs, harrows, yokes, spades, all the arsenal of Ceres, are as simple as in the days when Proserpine went a-maying through Enna; houses, furniture (if the words are applicable, a double point), garments, customs, &c., are on the model of unknown years in backward reckoning. Posts, newspapers, and the like means of intercourse with the outer world, of course, there are none; visitors like ourselves are a rare and memorable event to be discussed for years after—a stray traveller of any kind is, in fact, a godsend. The inhabitants, too, in their turn have little to communicate to others, did they wish it; Gray's and Goldsmith's villagers were not less ambitious of fame. The intellect of the hamlet, a star of the very smallest magnitude, irradiates only the neighbourhood of the

mosque, in the forecourt of which daily gatherings of idleness are held, and the 'Phosphor' himself is the 'Mollah,' legist, or 'Imam,' precentor. These men are often pupils of some small provincial college fifty miles distant: their profession gives them right to somewhat of a magisterial tone: for the rest see the Memoirs of P. P. Clerk of the Parish. In which stagnation our readers may suppose they see a chief reason for the entireness of rural Islam.

Yet it is not exactly so. Had these country-folk wider knowledge, were they in more frequent intercourse with their fellow-subjects or with strangers, the result would most likely be—at least it has proved so in many parallel instances—that not of weakening but of strengthening the Mahometan element in their character. The practical revelation of the great and vigorous brotherhood of which they form part, the contact of so many other nationalities, all Islam and proud of being such; the very comparison, not always a favourable one, that they would learn to draw between the conditions, social, moral, and even political, of some non-Islamitic nations and their own, all would tend to intensify rather than to slacken their attachment to their own creed.

Another peculiarity of country life, and which renders it also in a manner specially favourable to a vigorous development of Mahometan practice, is the relative importance of the female sex—'fair' or 'softer' we would have said, but cannot, for exposure and hard work soon do away with all title to these courteous adjectives in country life. No one acquainted with the history of Islam ignores the part borne by Khadijah, Fatimah, and Ayesha, all women of the Prophet's own household, in its rise; nor in subsequent epochs are the names of the other Fatimah,

daughter of Merwan, of the queenly Zobeydah, and the saintly Zeynab, less prominent. It is a matter of general experience that in what regards religious fervour, if men are the coals women are often the breath that blows them.

Now, of what kind are the women that mostly influence the 'Stamboollee' we need hardly say; there are operas in the capital of Turkey, and 'Mabilles' too after a fashion. The military classes are, from the nature of their profession, little under female agency, for good or bad; but what they want in 'esprit de famille' is made up to them amply in 'esprit de corps.' But the peasant woman, who shares pretty equally her husband's labours in the field, and has besides on her almost all the care of a house too simple for seclusion or privacy, is a being of an equally different stamp from the 'Light of the Harem' and from the light of the opera-house. The interposing veil excepted, to lay aside which is in Eastern ideas the token not of freedom but of slavery, she mingles in the daily life of the other sex not less freely, and often not to less purpose, than her European sister of similar rank; and above all she aids to ferment the general mass with that leaven of peculiar devotedness and 'religiosity,' if the word be permitted, which in all countries is pre-eminently hers.

To this circumstance may in no small degree be attributed the prevalence among the peasantry of a whole class of devotional practices, not indeed in strict accordance with the severe monotheism of the Prophet and his first companions, and even now reprobated with more or less emphasis by the better instructed among orthodox Mahometans, but for all that harmonising admirably with the grosser conceptions of Turks, Turkomans, Koordes, Chaldæans, and the other non-Arab races

who together make up the bulk of the agricultural population. First of these practices comes saint-worship, never indeed rising to the colossal hagiolatry in vogue among Greek and Catholic Christians, but holding a mid rank between that and the hero-worship of Carlyle and his school; and uniting memorial veneration with a hope of supernatural aid and intercessory benefit. To this feeling, however, unauthorised by the Koran, yet by pious ingenuity reconciled with it somehow, we owe the countless little shrines known in the north as 'Tekkehs,' in the south as 'Mezars,' that stud the entire surface of Anatolia, Koordistan, Irak (the Bagdad provinces), and great part of Syria; each one a memorial of some real or mythic saint or champion of Islam. Four plain walls, a small dome above; two or three trees without; within, the customary 'Kibleh' niche and very often a tomb: such is the Tekkeh. Hither the country folk, the women especially, flock on stated days; each brings his or her small offering of oil to the lamps, of provisions, fruit, garden-stuff, or copper coin to the guardian; others hang rags of cloth on some neighbouring bush for preservative against disease or cure of it; all recite prayers, not to the saint indeed, 'for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful' Mahometans, but to God; with honourable mention, however, of the local saint, whose mediation they suggest. In return, they receive from the saint's earthly representative, the guardian before mentioned, scraps of paper, whereon are inscribed verses of the Koran, names of Prophets and the sons of Prophets, and such like gear, mingled with pious ejaculations and cabalistic letters. These are carefully guarded, sewn into little square or triangular bags of leather, silver embroidered, and subsequently worn round arms and necks, hung upon children,

horses and mules, inserted into caps, &c., in the same manner and to the same ends as scapularies, Virgin-medals, and so forth, nearer home—with equal efficacy.

The legends attached to the worthies of the Tekkeh or Mezar are sometimes simply ascetic and miraculous; more often—for Islam in all its phases is emphatically a Church militant—of a pugnacious character. This holy man annihilated forty thousand infidels with a single blow of his staff; that one, more modest, contented himself with the amputation of ten Greek patriarchs' heads; three saints whom we may still see—their tombstones at least—resting side by side under the shade of a lovely little poplar grove, here await the boastful and oversecure invasion of the last great armies of Infideldom, commanded by the Infidel Emperors, all of them, the Russian, the French, and the Austrian probably, in person; when they—the saints, that is—will arise and drive the Infidel Emperors discomfited back to Petersburg, Vienna, Paris, or hell, as the case may be.

The guardian of the 'Tekkeh' is, nine instances out of ten, a dervish. Into the historical origin and progress of that curious class, or rather classes of men, for their varieties like their numbers are legion, we cannot here enter; the subject would require a volume. Offspring of the great 'Alee schism; fostered by the infiltrated superstition of Magian and Hindoo; accused, and on no doubtful evidence, of secretly subverting the very foundations of Islam, of substituting Pantheism, Polytheism, nay, Androlatry itself, for its pure Deism, and worse than Phallic rites and license for the Mosaically severe code of the Prophet, prayer and the decent Harem: they have, nevertheless, thanks to legists like Aboo Haneefah, doctors like Ahmed El-Ghazalee, and sultans like Bayazeed II., succeeded

in vindicating to themselves a sufficient, though not an unquestioned, reputation of orthodoxy, much as Becky Sharp established her own disputed reputation by presentation at Court, and are now at last in tolerably secure possession of the same. But, like many others in analogous situations, they have, with the name and character of genuine Mahometans to support, assumed much of the thing also, and it is with this alone, their present phase, that we are now concerned.

A high, conical, Persian-looking cap, long unkempt hair, dirty flowing garments, or no garments at all, the Adamitic-saint species not being yet wholly extinct, are the ordinary outward characteristics of the tribe. To these must be added an ostentatious frequency in prayer and other devout practices, some simply ridiculous and offensive, like the over-famous performances of the whirling, or, in Sir R. Wilson's phrase, waltzing brotherhood, the glass and snake-eaters of Aleppo, &c.; others extravagant, howling declamations and endless reiteration of the Divine Name and attributes; others, Koran-readings for instance, and multiplied prostrations, of a quieter description. Every dervish is of course primed with legends and traditions, all equally veracious, regarding some founder, prophet, or pet saint, till one is tempted to suspect them of plagiarism from the 'Golden Book' or the volumes of the Bollandists. Yet the fire of their zeal, though much less ethereal in quality than that lighted on the primal altar of Islam, is not, in result and practice at least, incompatible with it; their arms are not those of the Prophet and his companions, but they are ranged on the same side of the battle-field; and however little their affected poverty, their renunciation of worldly pleasures and duties, their rules and ways, their charms

and amulets, would have met the approval of him who said—blessings on him for saying it!—'no monkery in Islam,' and 'a day of business equals in merit twenty days of prayer,' still in the peasant mind these things coalesce, however illogically, with the Koran itself, and confirm the supremacy of the book which, rightly understood, disowns them. In a word, the dervish swarms are to Mahometanism allies, though irregular; excrescences, yet props. In the towns they are comparatively little heeded; but in the country districts, and, as above said, among the women especially, they constitute a real and energetic force.

A strange trio of motives, social discontent, family influence, and abnormal superstition, all three combine in one result, common to the whole country population; in the production of one feeling, keen alike in the old descendant of the nobility of the land and in the peasant who tills that land, pervading the dingy, decaying hall of what was once the manor-house, and the smoke-browned, earth-floored hovel of the poorest cottager; and that feeling is one of unswerving devotedness to Islam, and equal antagonism to whatever weakens or menaces its existence.

Widely differing in origin from the spirit that animates the military class, the direction they tend towards is the same. True, the Mahometanism of the army is more in accordance with the original tone of Islamitic institutions; more imperial, more unselfish, more ideal, so to speak; whereas that of the country-folk is more interested, more provincial, more patriotic too, in the etymological sense of the word, because based on the love of the birth-land itself. Both lines, however, converge to one point; and it was their very convergence, or rather the

tremendous force evoked by their contact, that so often, when the incapacity or misconduct of its rulers had brought the Ottoman Empire to the verge of dissolution, hurled unworthy sultans from their thrones and rolled the heads of corrupt and tyrannical ministers in the dust. The revolutions that gave so abrupt, and sometimes so bloody, a close to the reigns of the capricious Osman II., the degraded Ibraheem, the inefficient Mehemet IV., and the luxurious Ahmed III., were no mere Janissary insurrections, as superficial Western historians and court-salaried Eastern annalists have represented them; they were national and essentially Mahometan risings against corruptions and misrule; the Janissaries and Sipahees were herein but the representatives of the people, the sword in their hand. That sword has now been shivered: and the new one forged in its stead has been carefully placed at safe distance from the hand which else might once more grasp it to terrible effect. The destruction of the Janissaries and Sipahees brought after it in the most correct sequence of historical logic the ruin of the provincial nobility and landed interest: this itself to be soon followed by the ruin of the entire peasantry. Since then we have had the old history of the latter Byzantine Empire under the Comneni and the Palæologi over again. And it is a remarkable proof of the strong grasp maintained by Mahometanism over the minds of its followers that the Turko-Arab population, however wronged and betrayed by their own Mahometan rulers, have never yet, like the French of 1792, confounded in one common hatred the creed of their oppressors and the oppressors themselves. Their attachment to Islam has not for an instant slackened, though that to the rulers of Islam has been violently shaken, if not loosened altogether.

A truce to politics; the topic is an unsatisfactory one in the Levant. Let us rather, before bidding farewell to our Begs and villagers, look round once more at them under their better, or positive, aspect, that is as staunch and genuine Mahometans. An anecdote, for the truth of which local and individual knowledge enables us to vouch, brings this side of their character into full view.

A small landowner, married but childless, was living about twelve years since on his grounds, not far from the town of Erzinghian in Anatolia. His neighbours (an ordinary circumstance in the East) were mostly of the same kith and kin; but his only near relative was a younger brother, a lad of eighteen or twenty, a 'Deli-kān' or 'wild-blood'—madcap Harry we might say. One day this youth engaged in a quarrel with an individual of another village; from words they came to blows; blows, in a country where every man is constantly girt with the Kamah, a short, sharp-pointed, double-edged sword, much like some of those pictured in Adams's *Roman Antiquities*, mean wounds; and our 'Deli-kān' received so emphatic a one on this occasion that his hot blood was cooled for ever. The homicide, delaying to fly, was seized by the tribesmen of the deceased, and by them delivered up bound to the head of the family—namely, the elder brother—to suffer condign punishment, surer at the hands of a relative than of the law. It was evening; and Moḥammed, after fixing the next morning for the execution of due vengeance on the culprit, caused him to be shut up, well manacled, in an inner room of his own house; while the captors dispersed, eager to return at daybreak. But during the night Moḥammed, while all in the house slept, went secretly to the room, unbound the prisoner, embraced him, and said, 'God

has taken my brother and has sent you; I accept you in his place.' He then set food and drink before him, after which he added, 'I would gladly retain you here as a guest, did I not know that my doing so would be fatal to yourself. Take this,' giving him a purse of money, 'and make good your escape without delay; only do not tell me where.' The man did so; and in the morning when the avengers came, their victim was gone. The truth of the matter was not divulged till some years later; and when it was, all the kinsmen themselves joined in applauding Mohammed for having sacrificed the claims of his own brotherhood to save the life of a Muslim.

There is plenty of making in men of this stuff, if those whose real interest it is would only give their minds to it.

Leaving our readers to draw their own conclusions, which we would on no account forestall, regarding the present and the future of Levant Mahometanism among the country folk and their Begs, let us next turn our imaginary horses' heads townwards; and from the study of a very numerous category pass to one less largely represented on the Census lists; yet in importance almost or quite the equal of the former, because much better endowed with means and wealth. For even in the decayed, depopulated Levant, the classic ground of ruined villages, and even among the Mahometan inhabitants, whose commercial reputation is, in the West, so absolutely eclipsed by that of their more business-driving Christian fellow-citizens, the lively Greek and the thrifty Armenian, trade has a nowise insignificant representation; and towns, however small, take the lead by superior development of mind over the comparatively uneducated multitudes of the plough.

Keysareeyah, Diar-Bekir, Aleppo, Mosool, Homs, Bagdad, to whichever we direct our way we shall find fair specimens of the urban and commercial class. We thread with some difficulty to our horses, ourselves, and the foot-walking throng, the narrow, crooked, ill-paved or unpaved streets, enquiring for the abode of Hasan Agha, the great corn-dealer, Mustapha el-Misree, the cloth-merchant, or some other individual of the kind with whom we purpose taking up our quarters; after repeated enquiries, endless windings in and out, and miraculous escapes of riding over any number of muffled women and heedless children, we find ourselves at last before the outer door, and enter the court.

There is a considerable uniformity in the externals of domestic architecture, or rather a general want of anything worthy the name of architecture at all, in most modern Eastern towns. Flat walls with oblong holes in them, a few more or less, for windows—sometimes for an incredible length with no holes at all; the reason being that the apartments behind are lighted up from the court-yard side—form a surface the insignificance of which no superadded ornament can really redeem, being wholly insufficient to remove the effect of drear monotony which characterises the exteriors of these buildings, one and all, from Palace No. 3 on the dusty banks of the Alexandrian Canal, to the house of Patronides or Dimitraki at the opposite and drearier extremity of the empire on the Trebizondian shore of the Black Sea.

Thus, in respect of true architectural value, modern Eastern houses, whether Mahometan, Armenian, or Greek, are, as before said, much on a level, and that level a low one. Each has, however, something that individualises it to a certain extent, and acts the sign-board to make known the nationality of the indweller.

Thus, the Greek is apt to try his hand, not over-successfully, at European imitation; while the Armenian displays a more Oriental taste by protecting ledges, strong colouring, and so forth. The Mahometan townsman has also his own distinctive marks, whereby his house may be very generally recognised at first sight. Pious inscriptions, wherein the name of God figures always, and that of Mahomet sometimes, decorate the corners and the upper roof-sheltered lines of the walls in all the graceful intricacy of Arab caligraphy. Thus, for instance, a blessing on the Prophet takes the form of a dodo-like bird, resolving itself, legs, wings, beak, and all, on laborious anatomical deciphering, into words and sentences; an invocation of the Deity contracts itself into a scriptural egg, or expands into what may be supposed to represent a cypress, a palm-tree, &c. Bonâ-fide flowers, too, wreaths, spears, swords, drums, banners, and other cheerful or martial objects are often depicted; and, in their complicated combination of form and hue, recall something of the gorgeous Saracenic colour school, familiar to Europeans in the relics of the Alhambra. Curious carving, too, is bestowed on lintels, eaves, and doorposts; the woodwork of the windows also is often tasteful, if considered in itself, though wanting harmony with the general lines and proportions of the building in which it is set. Lastly, the greater extent of lattice along some of the window ranges, those, of course, belonging to the Harem, decisively indicates the Mahometan proprietor.

But it is in the interior that the characteristics of life and custom must chiefly be sought. Besides the Kibleh-Nameh, or Mecca-pointing niche already described in the country Beg's reception-room, but here, as befits town elegance, more graceful in shape, more brightly coloured, and more copiously adorned with

Arabic inscriptions, the entire domestic arrangement betokens usages widely different from those which regulate the 'native-Christian' dwelling. The 'Salamlik,' or men's apartment, being here exclusively destined to guests and visitors, is smaller than the Greek and Armenian parlour, which serves for family accommodation also. But in the Mahometan dwelling this guest-room is more carefully and completely furnished. Carpets and cushions, often of costly work, are laid down with prodigality; chairs and tables are decidedly scarce. Numerous 'sherbet' glasses, gilt or stained, are ranged in the open cupboards along the walls; pipes, pipetrays, nargheelehs and their accompaniments stand in rows, though more from a traditional idea of the suitability of their presence than for actual use, so universally has the cigarette superseded them of late years; arms, swords, daggers, guns, pistols, occasionally even lances, bows and arrows, all old-fashioned, and more commendable for their inlay of gold, silver, and mother of pearl, than for any practical utility, are distributed about the apartment. Pictures, too, under certain restrictions, are not uncommon; birds are a favourite subject; another is afforded by architectural views in ultra-Chinese perspective, purporting to represent some celebrated mosque, that of Sultan Seleem, perhaps, or of Mehemet the Conqueror; or, more frequently still, the Meccan Ka'abeh, the Prophet's tomb at Medineh, or the sacred building at Jerusalem known by the name of El-Aḳṣa, or 'the extreme,' by some supposed to occupy the site of Solomon's temple, by others elevated to the dignity of the authentic Holy Sepulchre. Also, and in still greater abundance, choice poetical inscriptions, framed and glazed. Some are in Persian, some Arabic, many in that old high-flown Stamboollee jargon, half of which

was Persian, one-third Arabic, and the remainder at best of Tartar origin, the despair of the ordinary Turkish scholar, and seldom wholly intelligible to the fortunate possessor himself; but all the more precious on that very account, 'omne ignotum,' &c., holding no less true in the East than in the West. Other writings, like those before-mentioned, are only triumphs of caligraphy, of illegibility, that is, 'Insha'-Allah,' 'God-willing,' a precautionary phrase frequent on the lips, nor rare in the mind and heart; 'Ya Hafiz,' 'Ya Rabb,' 'Ya Fettaḥ,' all invocations of the Deity under various propitiatory attributes, perhaps the oft-recurring 'Eṣ-selam w'es-Ṣelāt 'ala *kh*eyr il-Ma*kh*looḳat,' 'Salutation and blessings on the noblest of created beings,' Mahomet, *bien entendu*, are tortured into every variety of Runic knot and pictorial misnomer. Other gilded borders enclose congratulatory verses on occasion of the birth of a son, the building of a house, the celebration of a marriage, and so forth. In each of these rhythmic performances the last hemistich gives, by the decomposition and summation of its letters according to their numerical value, the date of the happy event in question, a favourite process of Oriental ingenuity.

Besides the 'Salamlik,' there exists in the larger and better style of houses one or more other rooms, also set apart for the entertainment of guests. These are in general less abundantly furnished, and are intended for occupation by night rather than by day. They have Divans, and little besides. Should it, however, be winter, a large brass 'Mankal,' vulgarly 'Mangal,' or wide-mouthed copper vessel for holding charcoal, about a foot and a half in diameter, and with a stem of about equal height, the whole exquisitely burnished and scoured, will adorn the centre of the apartment. Open

stoves, with dog-irons, common in country localities, are rare in towns.

The welcome is hearty, not less so than that given by our rural proprietor, but more refined in its manner. Eating, drinking, and smoking come each in its time, but early and abundantly. Conversation, as befits town life, flows readily in various channels. Trade, politics, literature, religion, all topics are freely discussed. But, unlike what we have been accustomed to in Greek and Armenian houses, there is seldom any particular anxiety or even interest manifested regarding European news; whereas a word about Persia, Samarkhand, Balkh, Bokhara, India, or even China, finds attentive listeners and ready questioners. Above everything, the fortune of the Mahometan dynasties, better perhaps called anarchies, of Central Asia, now struggling against the encroaching tide of Russian absorption, is a frequent theme, and the possible or probable results of Muscovite contiguity to the British possessions in India are discussed certainly with more earnestness and, it may be, with more understanding of the case, than they commonly are within the precincts of the Victoria Tower itself.

We have heard a French traveller—respect for a great name shall here suppress it—seriously assert, and assert believing, that at the bare mention of 'France' or 'French,' every eastern heart, Turkish, Arab, Persian, etc., instinctively thrills with sympathy, every face beams with fraternal desire; every hand is stretched out for a loving and longing grasp. Our English readers, young or old, are, we think, not likely to see such visions or to dream such dreams regarding the effect produced by an allusion to their own 'tight little island' and its belongings; nor, we respectfully hope, will they suspect us of seeing and dreaming them either.

If truth must out, liked in general we are not, loved still less; but we are respected, and more particularly by the Mahometans of the East. To this feeling many causes have contributed; two alone need mention here. And firstly, though England and her destinies be not indeed, absolutely considered, matter of much sympathy to Turk or Arab, Russia is one of intense hatred; and in proportion that England is or may be a counterpoise, is she cherished in their minds. Again, Protestantism, in its more simple and intellectual character, shocks Mahometan taste less than the tawdry finery and pious sensuality of the Catholic system, or the gross hagiolatry and complicated ceremonialism of Oriental Christianity. Thus the friendship of a common interest is less chilled than it might otherwise be by offensive adjuncts; and the great gulf fixed between Eastern and Western, if not bridged over, is at least perceptibly narrowed where England forms the opposite brink. Indeed, to govern a Mahometan population, that of Egypt—we deprecate the faintest suspicion of suggestion—for example, though a task difficult enough for a non-Mahometan race of whatever stamp and kind, would yet be easier, far easier, for English rulers than for any others. Such, in fact, is the general persuasion among Mahometans themselves in the Levant; the eventuality is in their mind one by no means to be desired; yet one also that might, should events so order, be submitted to with a good grace.

'Quo Musa tendis?'—From the dangerous pitfalls of politics, conversation escapes to the safer grounds of literature; and here a wide field opens out. We have already seen how contracted are the limits of ordinary Stamboollee acquirements; while the military class in Turkey, following for the matter of that the example of 'the Captain' in most countries, from the hero of

'Hamilton's Bawn' to Marshal Soult inclusive, enjoy a prescriptive freedom from the labours of the lamp. Nor would any one expect in general to find much book lore among the agricultural classes, whose talk is about oxen, and whose whole soul is in the furrows of the plough. Little more should we of Europe look for the representation of national learning among those whom we emphatically term 'business men.' In the East this is, however, precisely the class which divides with the Legists or 'Mollas' the chief literary honours of the land.

The apparent anomaly is easily explained. For while on the one hand the town-nurtured mind is naturally predisposed to enquiry and research of all kinds, on the other, business, as it is generally understood in the Mahometan world, high and low, has little of the speculative and venturesome character that renders it in Europe and America so all-absorbing to the energies of those concerned in it. What is the nature and what are the precise causes of this diversity we shall presently see. Meanwhile, except during the very hours of the day when the counting-house and store-room are unlocked, and the time that the merchant or shopkeeper has his books and ledgers actually open before him (and not always even then), the East-Mahometan 'man of business' can, and in general does, as completely leave aside the cares, anxieties, and even the very thought of his 'bread-earning' labour as ever did Charles Lamb himself when round the corner of Leadenhall Street. But then no one in England would have ever dreamt of calling Charles Lamb a good 'business-man,' whereas he might have been a very pattern specimen of the article in the East. Freed from his commercial duties, the intelligence of the Oriental tradesman, already disciplined into activity by stated though light work,

readily seeks and finds occupation in studies congenial to his personal bent, whatever that may be. Many have when young received a tolerable education in the local schools, 'Mektebs' and 'Medresehs,' besides the instruction derived from private '*Kh*ojas' or tutors; and have acquired a knowledge of Arab and Turkish literature, narrow in its limits, but within those limits deep and complete of its kind. This foundation once laid, individual diligence, undistracted by daily newspapers, periodicals, and the plethora of books which often overlays the Western student almost to suffocation, perfects the task. '*Cave hominem unius libri*' still receives its full application in the East; and the careful study of a dozen Arabic volumes in the close Boolac print, read over and over till they have been almost retained by heart, can do much to store the reader's head with material for thought and discussion. History, poetry, and romance, these volumes contain little else; but so far the library is a very well furnished one, much more so than is generally known in Europe, except among that small idiosyncratic class denominated as 'Eastern scholars.' Abnormal beings! for the poles of European thought and deed, and of Asiatic, lie too far asunder for any sympathetic communication between the twain in the ordinary course of things. Meanwhile, our amateur mercantile student becomes a 'well-read' man in his line, and troubles himself little about Western sciences and languages. Besides, man, in his intellectual, social, and moral aspects, is still the main topic of Oriental writings, and to him, one way or other, nineteen out of twenty volumes refer. Next to this, '*proximus, sed longo proximus intervallo,*' comes natural history. Chemistry is still worse represented; geology, pálæontology, astronomy, mechanical science, and the like, it would be superfluous to expect.

Arab and Turkish poetry and romance; chronicles of the Early Arabs (very apocryphal); lives of Mahomet, of his companions, of other Islamitic, and even of a few non-Islamitic celebrities; annals of the Caliphs, of the Seljook dynasties, of the Ottoman Empire in war and peace; narratives of Persia and the trans-Oxian regions; abridgments even of universal history (Abool Feda's is the most popular); an occasional book of travel; religio-moral, metaphysical, legal, medical, ultra-Galenian treatises; all our merchant's private studies, as the list just given sufficiently shows, go to confirm his Mahometan ideas; and while they widen them enough for toleration, deepen them in precision and certainty.

Mr. G. H. Lewes, in his interesting *Biographical History of Philosophy*, winds up with a trumpet blast proclaiming the final triumph of Positivism over Metaphysics; and declares not inutility merely but impossibility to be the term of all ontological and speculative research. How far the European mind at large acquiesces in such a conclusion may be questioned; but that the Levant-Mahometan mind is still very far from it, we can confidently affirm. And in fact Mahometan Unitarianism—we employ the word in a purely non-controversial, not in its special and sectarian application—is highly congenial to the entire school of thought initiated by Spinosa, and worked out by Berkeley, in the West. Ebn-Farid, an authoritative name in these lands, distinctly asserts in his master lyric, the *Tey'yeeyat*, that he who acknowledges any duality whatever in the whole circle of Being is no true Muslim. For him God is One, God is Force, God is Mind, Matter is Force, Matter is Mind, Matter is One, and so on, through the entire array of categories, effects, manifestations, transcendentals, &c. This doctrine of Pantheistic sound in European ears, yet widely removed

in Oriental apprehension from what Europeans ordinarily understand by Pantheism, is widely spread in the East, and is indeed held by nine-tenths of the thinking world there; nor does it in any way interfere with adherence to the Islamitic system; on the contrary, rather acts as a confirmation. With comparative ease it accomplishes the feat aimed at, but hardly attained as yet, by the so-called Rational Religion or Broad Church school of England and Northern Europe—that, namely, of co-adapting the dogmatically narrow phrases of canonical origin, with the later breadth of scientific and philosophical discovery; and of thus effecting not so much an alliance—a suspicious term—as an identification of the new, however rapid and imperious in its progress, with the old. In this respect the comparative simplicity, not to say barrenness, of the holograph Koran, is undoubtedly much less embarrassing to the liberal-minded commentator than is the multitudinous array of fact and dogma contained, or implied, in our own more composite volume. The Mahometan speculator, while reducing his universe with all its phenomena present or possible to an absolute One, affirmation or negation, only thereby develops to its ultimate consequences, unforeseen perhaps but not unauthorised, the great unity doctrine of the Koran and Islam; the pillar which not only sustains but which itself is almost the whole of the edifice. Hence follows a tolerating spirit, which, while admitting all, renders further change next to impossible, because simply superfluous; and a largeness of belief that no subsequent discoveries can disconcert, because all are pre-included.

But let us hear on this subject the most popular of Mahometan didactic poets, Ebn-Farid, speaking as mouthpiece of the personified Unity, in verses of which the almost startling clearness may on this occasion

partly atone for the defects inherent to translation. They occur towards the close of a long poem already alluded to, and known, by name at least, to every educated child of Islam, from Bosnia to Bagdad.

By Me the Koran illuminates the prayerful recesses of the Mosque;
And by Me the sanctuary of the Church is alike lighted up with the Gospel.
In Me the volumes of the Old Testament wherein Moses addressed his people
Evening by evening advantage those who listen to the chaunt of the elders.
The savage who falls prostrate to the stone he worships in the plain,
It were folly to deny that he occupies a place among my adorers.
And they who danced round the Golden Calf may well be excused
From the slur of polytheism, by the ultimate meaning of things.
Thus it is: in no sect or nation has the view been misdirected;
And in no system has man's thought gone astray from Me.
Whoever has admired the sun in the splendours of its rising,
Has but seen in the brilliancy of its light an unveiling of mine.
The inextinguishable fire of old tales, the miracles of nature,
Mine they are, and all their wonders are included within my Law.
Existences ordained in the classification of nominal modalities,
And Law working by the diversification of attributes in the Oneness of Substance.
That Law balances all for ever between affirmation and negation,
Between pleasure and pain, fullness and want, being and not-being.
Thus men saw the reflection of my brightness, and imagined it substance:
And their very error was occasioned by and went no further than my ray.
And were it not for the veil of existence I would proclaim myself;
But the maintenance of phenomenal Law imposes silence.
In One the All contemplates Me, and I that am contemplated am the All,
And contemplating I behold it to be myself, and in my light is light and bliss.
In Me the moon wanes not, and the sun never sets,
And in Me centre all the starry mazes in unerring order.
Mine is all Fact and all Energy of whatever lives and is;
I am the ordainer and the ordinance of effect in all space and time.

And were it not for the screen of Existences the splendour of my Essence
Had consumed and annihilated the appearances of its own manifestation.
Welcome then to the everlasting Unity, the One, the Truth,
Before which the greybeards of learning and experience are the merest infants.

With the special conclusions which an over-logical mind might deduce from such vast premisses, we have no concern. But whatever opinion be formed regarding the value of the doctrine, it will hardly be disputed that its immediate and natural result must be a tone of mind alike tolerant towards others, and averse to change in itself. To it we owe the phenomenon, not uncommon, but at times misinterpreted, of liberal-thinking Mahometans, capable of feeling and of expressing high appreciation and esteem for systems other than their own; the Christian for example. Whence occasionally follow hopes and conjectures as to the reversionary prospects of our Western ideas on the anticipated demise of Islam. But the matter is not so. The standing-point which the 'Broad Church' Mahometan has reached is one best, perhaps, defined as a pantheistic monotheism, perfectly reconcilable with the exoteric locutions of the Koran, and nearer in fact to the famous Chapter of Unity, than to any other known formula. As reasonably might a Mr. Maurice, or a Mr. Robertson, be expected to coalesce with Islam, as these men with Christianity.

But to pursue this topic further would lead us beyond the limits of our present scope; sufficed here to have sketched the general mental pose of our educated Levantine-Mahometan merchant.

Town-life has, however, furnished examples also of

a very different stamp; instances, it will be said, of religious intolerance and violent fanaticism, culminating in scenes like those which have from time to time disgraced Aleppo, Nabloos, Damascus, and Cairo. But the causes of these outbreaks invariably prove, on investigation, to have been of a national or political, nowise of a religious character. The few educated and well-to-do individuals who have taken an active part in these deplorable events, were animated by motives nearer akin to those which incited Elizabeth to her much harped-on persecution of Catholics, than to those which lighted up the fires of Smithfield under her devout and bloody predecessor. The plot once laid, the hopes of license and pillage would alone suffice to procure the complicity of the proletarian rabble never wanting in towns, Asiatic or European. But it would be unjust to lay either the malice of the leaders or the ferocity of the rabble to the charge of a religion which has, in the person of its most authentic representatives, Imams and Mollas, invariably disowned such acts, and branded them as the most atrocious of crimes. No Islamitic Gregory XIII. has yet caused Te Deums to be sung and medals to be struck in joyful commemoration of massacred unbelievers; no Meccan Holy Office has sentenced to death an entire population, even though of a creed differing from their own no less widely than that of the Protestant Netherlands from Spanish Catholicity.

That individual cases of ill manners and insult should here and there occur where the lower and uneducated town-classes are concerned, can hardly be a matter of surprise; the wonder would be at the contrary. Foreign usages and appearances occasionally provoke them, especially in out-of-the-way places;

unseasonable displays of zeal, of national peculiarities, of 'pride in the port, defiance in the eye,' have sometimes led to very disagreeable results. Still more is this the case where the foreign usages ostentatiously paraded are in contravention to what the 'natives' consider as conventional decorum or morality. Thus, unveiled female faces, and street drunkenness, things placed by Levant-Mahometan ideas on much the same level, except, indeed, that the former is in their eyes a sign of even deeper depravation than the latter, have from time to time acted unfavourably, and provoked impertinent or brutal demonstrations. But it would be hardly fair to hold the Mahometan religion as such responsible in this matter.

From the lower order of towns-folk, some of whose defects we have just noted, but who, on the whole, are quieter and more amenable by much to law and discipline than their more intelligent turbulent European counterparts, we return to the upper or mercantile category.

Very rare is avarice or even stinginess among this class of men. One of them feeds twenty poor every Friday from his kitchen and under his own roof; another year after year equips two or three pilgrims and sends them at his own expense to Mecca; a third takes under his charge and maintenance some bereaved family; a fourth erects public fountains, endows schools, &c.; hardly one but does something in the charitable line, for 'expiation,' in their ordinary phrase. 'Fasting conducts a man up to the gate of Heaven; prayer opens it; but almsgiving brings him within,' said the Prophet; and in this, as in many other recommendations, he has had the good fortune, rare among moralists and lawgivers, to be not only honoured but obeyed, even after the lapse of centuries.

Hospitality is a praise which the city folk share in common with the generality of Eastern Mahometans. But with larger means than those which civil, military, or rural householders possess, merchant hospitality is larger also; that it should be more elegant is a natural sequence of town-life. It is remarkable that while the establishment of public hotels at Pera, Smyrna, Beyrout, Alexandria, and many other points, especially on the Levant sea-board, has considerably modified Christian usage in this respect—so that these lodging-places are often crowded with Greeks and Armenians, who prefer them to the private quarters now more sparingly offered among their tribesmen—no perceptible change has yet taken place among Mahometan travellers, who still, if not boarded by some friend or cousin tenth removed, as is more often the case, select for night-quarters the old-fashioned khan; and in the day-time take their meals at the hap-hazard of friendly invitations, but rarely within the khan itself; next to never at an hotel.

Another quality widely diffused throughout the Mahometan world, and of which the merchant enjoys a full measure, is that of being satisfied with his position. The restless striving after admittance to a 'higher sphere,' whether of rank, fashion, or wealth, which chiefly influences the personages in Thackeray's tales, and perhaps in real English and European life, is here scarcely perceptible; the tradesman has no ambition to be classed among the 'Beg' nobility; and his wife is not likely to chatter much with her visitors and friends about noble acquaintances and decorated connections. In a word, the man of business is content to be and to pass for a man of business, and nothing more; the merchant for a merchant; the

private individual for private. This is partly a result, one desirable in some respects, but not without its drawbacks also, of the 'Kena'at' or 'contentment' doctrine, which forms so important an item in Islamitic teaching, from the Prophet's time downwards; it is also due in part to that absence of conventional gradations which characterises Levant-Mahometan life. No one in these lands thinks it anywise extraordinary that of three brothers one should be, e. g. a small shop-keeper, the second a General, and the third a Pasha; nor would the latter two deserve or obtain any special praise for condescension should they sit down to table together with the first, or walk with him down the most crowded and fashionable street of the Capital itself. That again this very recognition of individual worth and intrinsic fraternity, independent of social rank, and even of wealth, is in some measure due to Islam, we do not deny; but the pre-Mahometan annals of the East show that it has been at all times congenial to the national characters of Arabs and Koordes, Turks and Turkomans. And this in its turn tends to produce a certain ease and repose of manner, not precisely that which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, but sufficient to remove the Levant-Mahometan, generally taken, to an infinite distance from the typical 'snob' of our own satirists, and to make him, to a certain extent at least, a gentleman both in thought and bearing.

But it is time to consider our merchant in that which must constitute his chief praise or blame, his professional capacity. And here, again, we find him equidistant from the European on one side, and from the Levant-Christian of the same class on the other.

Among the many items in which the Mahometan

system requires, if not mending, at least large adaptation to an altered state of things, we must number the restrictions it imposes on trade. These belong to a whole category of precepts and prohibitions such as have fettered most religions; and the comparative freedom from which was no small merit of Christianity in its original institution. Simple, many would say defective, on its dogmatic side, the Mahometan code errs sadly by excess in its practical regulations, which extend to almost every detail of life, social and personal. For some the Koran is responsible, for some tradition. Many of these prohibitions were really useful at the time and for the local and national circumstances under which they were promulgated; but the inflexibility of religious sanction has rendered them real evils to a later and altered age. Of this kind are, for example, the laws regulating marriage, inheritance, and slavery; decided improvements, no doubt, on what had existed in Arabia, and even in the greater part of the world, before Mahomet's time; but, for all that, positively injurious when maintained in the midst of an advanced or advancing order of things. And to this list belong the limitations placed on commerce by the Arab legislator; and more especially his two great prohibitions—that of interest, and that of conditional contract. By the first of these, Credit, and by the second, Speculation, are absolutely removed from the sphere of trade; which is thus simplified down to a process sufficient perhaps for an inchoative society and restricted intercourse, but very inadequate to the requirements, or rather to the essence of business, as it is now carried on. Under the Mahometan system not only is the smallest percentage on money held illegal, but even the exchange of like for like within what, by Mr. Darwin's leave, we must,

for want of a better name, call species, as, e.g. the barter of corn against barley, of wool against goat-skins, of oxen against buffaloes, nay, some doctors aver, of metal against metal, is unlawful in itself; or at least is rendered null and void by the fact of any profit soever accruing from the exchange to either of the parties concerned. The same principle applies to all loan, use, or deposit. Again, by the second *veto*, that placed on conditional contract, all foresale, or bargain regarding a thing not yet in actual existence under the precise form bargained for, as, for example, corn while yet in blade, metal still in ore, and so forth, is excluded. And, by the same principle, all insurances, annuities, and speculations of every kind, are excluded also.

Whether or not commerce and business in general might ultimately be gainers were these regulations observed everywhere and at all times, without the very possibility of infraction, might be matter of theoretical enquiry. Loss of activity might, it is possible, be made up by gain in solidity; and immunity from the chances of bankruptcy might console for the certain impossibility of accumulated fortunes. Thus much is sure; that the trading world would pass into a very 'Cathay' of stagnation; and better, perhaps, fifty years of Europe, with all its national debts, insolvencies, crises, and joint-stock smashes, than that. Anyhow, the thing is now simply out of the question; nineteen-twentieths of the world that is world, have adopted the credit system in its fullest extent; and the remaining twentieth must, it is clear, join in, under penalty of an ostracism equivalent to extinction.

In matter of plain straight-forward interest on money-loans, a sort of compromise has been allowed rather than accepted; and twelve per cent. has passed

into permissive legality. Stambool set the example: and the provinces have followed; not readily, indeed, but passively; and under the silent protest of abstaining where possible, or at least ignoring. But in other respects the Prophet's original theory has suffered no infringement. Hence our Mahometan tradesman, imbued from his earliest youth with the persuasion that new interest is but old usury writ large; that insurance is a presumptuous invasion on the rights of Providence, and that all games of chance, from the pack of cards on the green table to the larger stakes played in the courts of the Bourse and Stock Exchange, are alike unlawful things, finds himself not unfrequently in sore straits; and is put to the strangest shifts by the pressing necessity of reconciling theory with practice, the dictates of Meccan law with the axioms of modern, and, above all, of European commerce.

True, where such questionable dealings regard a non-Mahometan contracting party, results may be accepted while the steps leading to them are prudishly suppressed; and, so long as a formal avowal is avoided, the Muslim trader may flatter himself that he is no party to the unrighteous process, however largely he may share in its subsequent advantages. Casuistry is a plant of all climates; and the Molinas and the Abbesses of Andouïllets of Western celebrity have their counterparts, though pale ones, in the East. But where the contracting parties are both Mahometans, the flattering unction of self-deceit requires a thicker laying on; and evasions, which the moralist may laugh or cry over according to his mood, are frequently resorted to.

For instance, Aḥmed Ebn-Ṭahir wishes to sell to Moḥammed el-Feyoomee the autumn produce of a vineyard which is not yet in so much as leaf; and reason

good, the month is February. Thus, by all the traditions of El-Boāree, all the decisions of Aboo-Hanifeh, and all the glosses of Aboo-Yoosef, a transaction for the very tendrils would be illegal, let alone the grapes. On the other hand, the bargain is an advantageous one. How can it be brought about?

Witnesses are summoned to the 'Divan' of Ebn-Ṭahir; and all other suitable preparatives for an act of transfer are made in due form. The master of the house then gives the word, and a servant enters the assembly, conducting with him a cat, not harmless only but necessary on this occasion. Our readers must not push the association of ideas so far as to suppose that the feline animal is specially selected on account of certain hypocritical qualities with which it may be endowed; any other quadruped or biped would do as well, but cats are generally most convenient to hand indoors. Accordingly enter puss, with a couple of grape branches suspended across her back by a string. A pair of olives, of brick or stone chippings, of pieces of soap, or of any substance whatever may hold place, according to the subject-matter of the proposed contract. 'Bear witness all you here present, that I have sold this load of grapes to Moḥammed el-Feyomee for twenty thousand piastres,' says Aḥmed. 'Bear witness all present that I have bought them of Aḥmed Ebn-Ṭahir at the same price,' subjoins Moḥammed. Papers are signed and registered accordingly; and a private understanding transfers the entire transaction to the vineyard produce at nine or ten months' date. Meanwhile the consciences of the parties concerned are quieted by the real existence of something belonging to the kind recorded in the deed of sale at the actual time of the sale itself.

A very childish proceeding, and belonging to a class

of 'reservations' appositely defined elsewhere as 'a lie, plus a shuffle.' For parallel illustrations vid. Liguori, Molina, Bonacina, Gury, &c. *passim.*

Other evasions, more clearly, however, marked with the broad stamp of dishonesty, are in frequent use. Interest is concealed under a fictitious augmentation of capital; insurance is veiled by an imaginary transfer; usury, gambling, all can pass muster under analogous disguises. How methods like these bring with them a double evil, that of commercial insecurity, and that of moral deterioration, may easily be understood. Yet even at the cost of such sacrifices at the altar of trade, the Mahometan merchant can but ill compete with the more thorough-going and unhampered Christian votaries of the golden goddess.

Very generally, however, and unless some extraordinary gain or urgent need be in view, the Levant-Mahometan trader eschews 'credit' under all its forms, and prefers to traffic in actual values. Hence, while his operations are slow, they are commonly sure; and his name figures comparatively seldom on the great Insolvency List, wherein his Greek, and even his Armenian brethren occupy so distinguished a position. Thus, for instance, in the great Levant crisis of 1858, when every Maronite and Melchite tradesman in Beyroot had to undergo whitewashing of some kind or other, and but few of the Syrian, Orthodox Greek, or Armenian dealers were able wholly to dispense with the same daubing process, the substantial Mahometan merchants of the city passed through the ordeal unscathed; and if they profited little by the mishaps of their colleagues, they at least lost nothing. Indeed, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that, in the Levant business-world an insolvent Mahometan is as rare a phenomenon as a solvent Greek. Thus far the

advantage derived from adherence to Koran and 'Sunneh' is real; though purchased at a price which may be considered as above its value.

Setting aside the casuistical shufflings sometimes induced, as above said, by religious constraint, a good feature of Mahometan men of business is, due allowance made for individual exceptions, their honesty. This quality, from whatever cause, runs through all Levant-Mahometan society, and contrasts it favourably with the Levant-Christian; but from the nature of things it attracts most notice in the mercantile class. A word among these men is, in general, as good as a bond; and both are respected. Indeed, we have known large transactions, involving the value of thousands, opened, continued, and satisfactorily concluded without a single written cypher. Few Europeans of long residence in the East but would rather have to do with a Mahometan than with any other 'native' soever, where money or honour are concerned. Black sheep are not wanting among them, indeed, no more than in any other flock; but they are the exception, not the rule. Our own Levant experience has more than once shown us mistakes in an account to the advantage of the receiver corrected by the receiver himself; an article omitted by accident spontaneously made good; an extra profit on a bargain acknowledged before enquired into, and paid before claimed. But these cases, one and all, were among Mahometans.

Among the citizen classes women have less direct influence than among the agricultural; nor can it be otherwise. Towns are the strongholds of etiquette, and Eastern etiquette has in all times honoured women, as some printers do the name of the Deity, by a blank. Mahometanism, in an evil hour for itself, took up and exaggerated this tendency. Still it would be strange if

among races gifted with such intensity of family feeling as Easterns commonly are, and under a system which asserts to the married woman rights in property and law equal in almost every respect to those of her husband, female authority or persuasion should go for nothing. Accomplished women, learned women, too, are not wanting; and in general it may be said that the town ladies of the Mahometan Levant, if not quite up to the standard of Miss Becker or of Dr. Elizabeth Walker, have a fair share of the superior culture that surrounds them. And if less accessible to saints and dervishes than their rural sisters, they are equally with them zealous supporters of Islam, only their zeal is more according to knowledge.

Lastly, it may be asked, What is the attitude of the mercantile class towards the existing Government, and order of things? Briefly, it is one less positively hostile than that of the agriculturists, yet far from friendly. Some, not a few, indeed, of the merchants are connected with the old Begs by birth or marriage, and sympathise with their disestablished relatives. Some, the better instructed from their studies, and the comparatively uneducated from their ignorance, are too zealous Mahometans to approve of measures emanating from Paris, or at least imitative of that capital and its Government. Some, again, murmur, with how much cause we will not here enquire, against an administration which, say they, takes much and gives nothing; taxes heavily the produce to which it has in no way contributed, and the commerce that it has rather cramped and fettered than facilitated; in a word, that reaps where it has not sown, and gathers where it has not scattered. Others are disaffected for all these reasons conjointly. In fine, universal suffrage, were it a possibility in these lands, would return opposition

candidates for the towns scarce less surely than for the country. A formidable combination. But as neither suffrage nor representation exist, the opposition is still *in posse* only, and, for the present, seems likely to remain so.

From the tradespeople and townfolk we come by an easy transition to the learned Profession.

III.

MAHOMETANISM IN THE LEVANT—*Concluded.*

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WE now come to that class the members of which are sometimes, but most erroneously, denominated in European writings, French especially, the 'Mahometan Clergy.' How far they are in fact removed from anything to which Western and Christian nomenclature assigns the title of Clergy we shall soon see. This class comprehends 'Mollas,' 'Ḳadees,' 'Muftees,' 'Imams,' 'Khateebs,' 'Sheykhs,' and some other professions of minor importance. Of the names now given, the first, 'Molla,' more correctly 'Mawla,' literally 'Master,' is generic, and applies to all who have gone through a regular course of legal study, and received a diploma. The attributions of a 'Ḳadee,' analogous to rather than identical with those of a judge, are sufficiently known to all readers of Oriental tales; the 'Muftee' is a Q.C. or Sultan's Counsel, to speak correctly, for Turkey; 'Imam' is best rendered by Precentor; '*Kh*ateeb' by Preacher; 'Sheykh' is a vaguer term of religious, but not of hierarchical, qualification.

Among these six categories, to which some minor ones of subordinate office are attached, the first three represent the legislative, and the latter three the doctrinal element of Islam. And as the legislative element

is immeasurably the more copious and complicated of the two, so also the professions which it has originated take a decided preference over the others in the social scale. None of them can, however, be, with any propriety of speech, designated as priestly, whether that term imply hereditary caste, like the Levites of independent Palestine, and the more enduring Brahmins of the Indian peninsula; or sacerdotal consecration, after the fashion of Roman and Protestant Christianity. Self-consistent in this particular, Islam, while it denies all gradational distinctions in the Deity, all mediatory and intercessory interposition, all the Court of circumstance with which Catholic divines love to surround the divine Monarch, effaces also from the terrestrial service of the absolute One all classification and subordinate ranks among the worshippers themselves. 'Each one for himself, and God for all,' is an almost literal translation of what the Koran sums up, and a hundred traditions confirm. Still, social fact recognises in its way what dogmatic theory denies, and gradations and classifications exist; but without the mysterious sanction of anointments, imposed hands, transmitted succession, ineffaceable characters, and whatever else is the dearest dream of ritualistic sentimentalism, and the despair of common sense even in our own day. In a word, the functions to be discharged by Mollas, Kadees, Imams, and the rest, are in many respects intimately connected with, and even essential to the religion of the land; but the religious quality remains inherent in the functions alone, uncommunicated to the persons of those who professionally perform them. The 'Khateeb' is not more sacred than his hearers, the 'Imam' than his congregation. We are speaking of 'Soonnee' Mahometanism; in the 'Shee'ah' and Persian theory the case is different.

But if we would correctly understand the position of the Turkish and Arab 'Molla' or Legist, let us take a flight of some two thousand years back into the domains of history and the regions of Palestine, among the men designated as 'lawyers' in our own version of the New Testament; men the expounders, and, in part, administrators of a legal code based on the precepts and prohibitions of a Sacred Book, and stamped in every detail of its decisions with divine authority. The lawyer is thus at the same time in no small measure theologian, and partakes of the well-known qualities, good or bad, of either profession. Narrowness of mind, bigotry of soul, uncharitable obstinacy blended with casuistic suppleness, the unfavourable features of the 'minister,' aggravated by the sharpness of temper and disputatious acrimony which form the 'worser half' of the legist character—all these may be expected here, side by side with the cultivated and widened intellect, the tolerant earnestness, the uprightness in judgment, and the sincere piety of thought and practice which are never wanting among the ranks of the 'learned professions.' Some individuals will partake more of the amiable, others of the unamiable temperament; some will in strange antithesis blend both in one; but most will exhibit two or three of these characteristics in a sufficiently marked manner; none will be wholly without them. Thus though the essential constituents of a caste are wanting, something of a caste-feeling exists—the inevitable result of similar studies and similar pursuits, both restricted within the narrow circles of dogma and custom. Nor is outward caste-likeness wanting. A studied gravity of demeanour, a countenance of pharisaical severity, an avoidance of rich ornament and gay dress, a serious tone, and a sententious elocution, are no less proper to

the 'legist' than the contraries of all these are to the 'Deli-Kan,' or young buck of Turkey. Unlike, however, the barrister's gown or the bishop's apron, the pattern decorum of the Jesuit, and the no less pattern slovenliness of the Capuchin, the outward 'notes' of the Mahometan 'Molla' are not uniform and obligatory. They are in fact the result of 'association of ideas' merely, not of official regulation. If he affects flowing robes and extensive turbans, it is because such habiliments seem becoming and natural to a learned, or at any rate a sedentary man; but neither robe nor turban declare themselves by any invariable speciality of cut or colour: and in these respects our 'Molla' verifies the European application given to the cognate sobriquet of 'Mufti.' The motives and practice that determine his style of dress are in fact precisely analogous to those which clothe the majority of our own M.D.'s and LL.D.'s in sober attire, or conversely decorate the sporting world with spotted neckcloths and dog's-head breastpins. So again a 'Molla' is less often to be seen on horseback than one of equal wealth and standing but of different profession; still nothing forbids the legist to mount his 'capering beast' too, if he has a seat, and a mind. Nor is a fowling-piece ordinarily in his hand; and yet we could instance a grave Mahometan judge, not far from Trebizond, whose performances among partridges and pheasants might almost provoke the jealousy of H.R.H. our own heir-apparent. And, to come to more serious matters, open infraction of Islamitic morality or gross misconduct of any kind is rare among the 'Mollas.' But the love of gain, so says popular rumour, and says true, deeply infects the entire class; few, very few, of its members are inaccessible to a bribe in one form or another.

These remarks are general; but in addition the

'Ḳadees,' or judges, have some distinguishing peculiarities of their own, by no means unfavourable ones.

When our own Bench was to be purified from the shameful contamination communicated to it by the later Stuarts, the first, and with all deference to the opinion of the great historian who assigns to this measure but an inferior importance, the chiefest measure taken was to render the judicial office a life appointment. Nor is the reason far to seek. A judge who depends hour by hour for the maintenance of his post on the Executive is much more likely to be its servant than the minister of justice and law. Such is precisely the case with the Turkish or Arab Ḳadee. But if the circumstances of his position tend of necessity to render him servilely pliant with the great and powerful, they are not less calculated to make him venal and unjust towards other classes. The absence of all effective control in a country where not only orderly and official superintendence, but even the restraint of public opinion, so powerful in Europe by the means of newspapers and intercommunication, is wanting, facilitates any amount of corruption; and if opportunity makes thieves, few Mahometan Ḳadees are likely long to remain honest men. In fact, the wonder is not that the Islamitic Bench is not better, but that it is no worse. A judge dependent on favour and independent of reputation is much more likely, as human nature goes, to prove a Kirke than a 'Daniel.'

With the 'Muftees' or Counsel, matters are much the same. Their duty is to draw up and enounce decisions for the guidance of the judges, and of the numerous tribunals which the recent 'Tashkeelat,' or Regulations, of 1867 especially, have multiplied on the face of the Ottoman earth. But they also hold their posts and their salaries at the caprice of the executive

officials, their real masters, and are no more under control, public or special, than the judges themselves. However, a man whose fortune is yet to make is in general more jealous of his own good name than one whose fortune is already made; and the Muftee being still a candidate for future advancement, is in most instances less corrupt, though not less subservient, than his judicial seniors.

To go into all the details of Mahometan law, and anatomise its courts and procedures, is not here our scope. We only sketch the men, touching on systems and institutions merely so far as is necessary to the right understanding of the characters of those who work them. Nor do we wish our readers to conclude that every Kadee is corrupt, every Muftee servile; such a conclusion would, fortunately, be far from the truth. We only state the too ordinary results of a vicious organisation.

One cause which probably contributes much to save these classes from sinking altogether into the utter abasement of time-serving venality, is to be found in the severe studies exacted from those who desire to enter its ranks. Whatever be the faults of a 'Molla,' ignorance of his duty is not likely to be one. The 'Softah,' more correctly, but less euphoniously pronounced 'Sootah,' or student, generally a child of the middle or lower orders, has at an age varying between eleven and fifteen donned the narrow white turban, usual though not universal among the undergraduates of Mahometan law, and exchanged the 'Mekteb' or school of his early years for the 'Medreseh,' or college of more serious studies. A course, of which fifteen years form the narrowest, sixteen or even eighteen the not uncommon limit, now opens before him; agreeably diversified by five stiffish fences, or probationary trials

at proper intervals, and a six-foot wall, in the shape of a general examination, at the end. The ground too to be gone over, always heavy, is of perplexing variety. First comes the minute, the Jewishly-scrupulous study of the Koran; a study rendered additionally difficult for non-Arab learners by the foreign language in which it is composed, and for Arabs themselves by its numerous archaisms, and a dialect now next-to-obsolete beyond the limits of Nejed and Hejaz. Then follow the commentators, an appalling array in number and in bulk; not always illustrative, often obscurative, and in all cases a severe tax on the memory;—let him try who will. Concurrent with the commentators comes tradition; a vast and shapeless mass of sayings and doings more or less correctly ascribed to the Prophet, his associate contemporaries, and immediate successors; needs hardly say that much of this congeries is apocryphal, an equal quantity futile, and not a little self-contradictory. But the 'pièce de résistance' in this intellectual banquet is the 'Soonneh,' the Blackstone of Islam; a collection of opinions and decisions emanating from the four great expounders of Mahometan law, Aboo Haneefah, Malik, Esh-Shafey'ee, and Ebn-Hanbal, besides the scattered rays of other legal luminaries, brilliant doubtless as the stars in the firmament—as mazy also. Last in order of time, but not of importance to the hapless student, comes the 'Ḳanoon,' or Civil Law of the Empire, the Digest of Sultan Sulеyman I., the Ottoman Justinian; frequently revised, corrected, superseded here, augmented there, by later Sultans, and their Ministers. To these a Frenchified appendix of Tanzeemats, Tashkeelats, Property-Codes, Penal-Codes, and what other reproductions of the 'Code Napoléon' the last three Sultans have poured like new wine into the very old and bursting bottle of the

empire, must now be added. Join to all this a running educational accompaniment of 'Nahoo,' mentioned before, of 'Muntik,' or Logic, of 'By'an,' or Rhetoric; join the complete study of the Arabic language with a fair proficiency in Persian; and the ordinary 'curriculum' of the average law-pupil or Softah lies before you. '*Rat thoree w'bahot sang;*' 'a short night for travel, and plenty of baggage to pack,' says the Hindoo proverb.

Pale and thin, the young student is easily recognised, even independently of his white turban; he has mostly a hard time of it at his college, where idle men and 'fast' men are unknown, no less than the Oxbridge solaces of 'wines,' 'pinks,' and proof prints of drowning martyrs. Here all is sad and sober earnest. Lodged in an unfurnished cell, with a worn shred of carpet for seat, table, and bed, between himself and the dank stones or rotten planks of the floor; bread and onions almost his only food, and not too much of that either; far away from his parents and relatives, from the playfellows of his childhood, from the native town or village to which he clung with the strong local affection of the Eastern, stronger than Irishman ever felt for Ballyshannon, or Swiss for the pastures of Uri; the future master in Islam has a weary time of it as well as a long one. Many succumb altogether to the hardships, physical and mental, of the 'Medreseh,' and 'meurent à la peine,' as the expressive French phrase gives it; others drag on, laying up for themselves in store much learning, a sickly manhood, and a premature old age; often to keep too for life-companion the poverty that attended them in their student boyhood; a few come out of the ordeal triumphantly, and issuing forth crowned with the laurels of well-passed examinations, diploma in hand, and health and strength yet in limb and frame, ascend

the gradations of preferment, and win the higher prizes. But 'the many fail, the one succeeds,' holds no less true at the Medreseh than at the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty or the London Inns of Court.

No traveller through the inlands of the Levant but must have met on his way more than one band of these thinly-clad, pale-faced youths, wending slowly on their long foot journey to some distant but renowned centre of learning, half pilgrims, half beggars, and more than half starved and wearied out. 'There is no god but God,' 'I bear witness that there is no god but God,' lay gasping one whom we ourselves once, on a hot summer day among the dusty hills of Southern Anatolia, found by the road-side dying of sheer exhaustion, amid half-a-dozen companions, travelling students like himself, unable to afford him any help but the support of their own lean arms and the repeated assurance of Paradise. One of our attendants hastened to fill a leathern cup from a neighbouring fountain, and put it to the mouth of the lad, if that might revive him. 'There is no god but God,' repeated he, as the water he vainly tried to swallow trickled back from his lips; a few instants later he was dead. We rode on to give the news at the nearest village, and in its cemetery he now rests.

It should also be noted in favour of the 'Molla' class, that however questionable their career and deteriorating its effects in after life, their first rise is, with rare exceptions, the result of honest merit and sheer hard work. A poor student, the son most often of some nameless peasant or shopkeeper, seldom inherits patronage, nor can he afford to purchase it. Hence, unlike the typical 'Stamboollee,' the first 'ply' given to his character is an upright one; nor is it always effaced by all the later oblique foldings of a career which offers every incentive to iniquity and corruption. Besides,

the prolonged study of religion and law, when it does not—and this is sometimes the case—narrow the mind and harden the character, has, by a strange but fortunate revulsion, precisely the opposite effect; the brightest no less than the blackest names have in all lands and times been written on the muster-rolls of divinity and law. Arab and Turkish treatises too, however dry and abstract their subject, are always thickly sprinkled with the inevitable Eastern anecdote; and the personal examples of justice, integrity, and forbearance with which Oriental law-books are jotted, remain fixed in the memory of the student, and not unfrequently influence him for life.

From this school have come forth time by time intrepid Muftees, who with the sword over their necks have refused to call evil good and good evil, to put darkness for light and light for darkness, to sanction injustice and to legalise oppression. Upright Kadees have again and again given sentence for the weak against the strong, the poor against the rich, the ruled against the ruler; Mollas of clear head and bold heart have appeared in the presence of tyrannical pashas and degenerate sultans, and have rebuked them to their face, to the peril and sometimes to the loss of their own lives. Scattered in a thin but never-failing series, these beacon-lights gleam on the path of duty and honour, from the era of 'Omar the Discerner, the severe but righteous Caliph, down to our own; nor are examples wanting in the Mahometan Levant at this day. Salt of their class, they preserve it from total corruption, and serve to show what judges, what counsel, what legists Islam might produce under a better order of things, not one that would corrupt an Escalus, let alone an Angelo.

The second category, that including 'Imams,' '*Kh*ateebs,' and 'Shey*kh*s,' with their subordinates, approaches

more nearly in the nature of its occupations, though differing yet more widely in the manner of their performance, to the Western ecclesiastical idea. An 'Imam,' as before said, is a kind of precentor or parish clerk; his duty is to stand in front of the congregation, facing the 'Kibleh,' or Mecca-pointing niche, at the appointed hours of devotion, that is, ordinarily, as every one knows, five times a day, when he recites aloud the public prayers, marks time for the various devotional postures, and, in a word, acts as fugleman to the worshippers ranged behind him, from whom, however, he is distinguished by no special dress, caste, or 'character.' *Primus inter pares;* but nothing more. The '*Kh*ateeb,' or preacher, usually reads out of an old well-thumbed manuscript sermon-book, or, though much more rarely, delivers extempore the Friday discourse, a short performance, seldom exceeding ten minutes in duration; on the same day he recites the '*Kh*otbeh,' an official prayer, wherein the name of the reigning sovereign has obligatory mention. 'The *Kh*otbeh was read in the name of so-and-so,' is an ordinary phrase in Eastern chronicles, equivalent to 'So-and-so was acknowledged ruler.' On other and extraordinary occasions the '*Kh*ateeb' may also ascend the pulpit; the fact is usually indicative of a crisis. Thus, during the riots and massacres of Central Syria, in 1860, the already excited populations of Homs and Hamah were restrained by the humane and judicious exertions of their *Kh*ateebs from following the disgraceful example set by the Damascene rabble. Of the Friday sermons a fair specimen may be found in Lane's inimitable *Egyptians*. Like the Imam, the '*Kh*ateeb' is a functionary at will, without any professional costume, either when on duty or at other times.

'Sheykh' is a denomination of twofold import.

Sometimes it coincides in part with that of 'Imam,' adding, however, an idea of general superintendence, over the mosque and whatever regards it, besides suggesting a special degree of learning and personal virtue in its bearer, and thus entitling him to high reputation and influence more than common. Yet even here the rank is neither inherent nor permanent, nor attended with any invariable colour of robe or width of turban. Sometimes the word implies connection with one or other of the Dervish brotherhoods or assemblies, which the 'Sheykh' leads, and where he not unfrequently arrogates to himself supernatural and mystic powers, acknowledged by his clique, doubted or derided elsewhere, disavowed by genuine Islam.

The functions and position of inferior 'church-mice,' of the 'Mu'eddin' or Prayer-proclaimer, the 'Bowwab' or door-keeper, 'Nakeeb' or Inspector, and so forth, explain themselves.

These men, one and all (excepting only the latter and anomalous 'Sheykh' subdivision, of whom we need say nothing more at present, having sufficiently discussed Dervish facts and pretensions on a previous occasion), as they are chosen from among the ranks of the people, town or country, so they remain in those ranks; and hence their apparent weakness and their real strength. Once outside the mosque, the 'Imam,' the 'Khateeb,' and whoever else may have officiated during the prayers, is a house-mason, a greengrocer, a pipe-maker, or anything else as before: a somewhat more than ordinary cleanliness of person and linen, with a slight tendency to long dresses, can alone mark him out to the practised eye; the practised ear, too, may detect in his conversation the results of private study, and of familiarity with the phrases of the Koran. But no regular course of education is required from

him; a good general reputation, freedom from debt and scandal, and the elective voice of the 'Harah' town-quarter, or of the village, constitute his sole and sufficient diploma. Any further acquirements, often not inconsiderable, are his own individual affair. And accordingly, while low in social and high in official rank, he is high in popular influence and conventional position. In fact, the influence exercised by these men is apt to be under-estimated by those men who, from the very absence of outward and distinctive signs, are unacquainted with their numbers, and whose ear fails to distinguish in the familiar tones of daily life the respect with which they are looked up to by the multitude. But that respect is not less real; and on the occurrence of any public event, from the gathering outside the village for the prayers 'in time of drought' to the trooping together of an insurrection, some one of this class is sure to come forward at once as the natural leader of the people. That these men are zealous, often bigoted, Mahometans, needs scarcely be said. And their voice is all the more listened to because comparatively unpaid for by stipends or emoluments; things which exist, indeed, but in proportions so microscopical that they can at most be considered an adjunct, not a motive. Their zeal has thus the full credit of purity, and is founded, so at least their followers believe, in knowledge and practice. Were they a caste apart, with means and interests of their own, they would be much less influential, among the men at least.

The decided preference given by Islam to marriage over celibacy, or rather its unequivocal reprobation of the latter, leaves no one unmarried in the learned classes, 'Molla,' 'Imam,' or other. The women are, however, in general of little consequence, hardly more

than housekeepers, though instances have occurred where the wife of a 'Muftee' or a '*Kh*ateeb' has rivalled her husband in acquirements and, pretty certainly, excelled him in what is called 'fanaticism.'

In conclusion, we cannot refrain from remarking that the Islamitic identification of religion and law is an essential defect in the system, and a serious hindrance to the development of good government and social progress in these countries. True, no creed was ever less multiple in its articles, less exacting in its practice, and less superstitious in its adjuncts, than the Mahometan. Still it is a creed, and as such tends in common with all religious systems yet devised to narrow the mind, cramp the faculties, and, above all, to run precisely counter to the adaptability essential in a law code made for men and their ever-changing circumstances. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that this blending of the two faculties into one gives to each additional strength, and so far confirms the edifice which it narrows.

We have thus passed in rapid but comprehensive review before us the five principal categories which form the bulk of the Levant-Mahometan world; but some classes, not numerous indeed, yet not wholly unimportant, and included within the national, though not within established social limits, remain for consideration.

Among these are the pastoral tribes, occupying a geographical space nearly half the surface of Asiatic Turkey, but in numerical strength scarce one-twelfth of the agricultural inhabitants. They belong to three stocks, Koorde, Turkoman, and Arab. All three are Mahometan; but the quality of their Mahometanism is as various as their descent.

And first, the Koordes; wild men, of whom it may be said, with even more truth than of the descendants of Ishmael, that 'their hand is against every man's, and every man's hand against them.' They are brave to a proverb; 'a cowardly Koorde, and a stingy Bedouin'—meaning two things alike impossible to find—runs the Eastern saying. They are in general excellent horsemen also; good shots—the more so considering the condition of their fire-arms, which have rarely progressed beyond the 'stone age' of flint; brawny fellows, often handsome, fond of dash and display, of gay dresses and embossed accoutrements, knowing in horses, sheep, and cattle, especially their neighbours', and good for nothing else. Fickle as water, treacherous beyond all belief, cruel, liars, and withal more obstinate than mules on any point but right and truth, they are the dregs of a vigorous nation, the nation of Noor-ed-Deen, of Ṣalaḥ-ed-Deen, of the Eyoobite Sultans, of great doings and iron rule, but a nation whose brief day of turbulent and blood-stained glory was soon over, whose flame flickered up for once fiercely, and left for after ages a worthless cinder, light though hard, glittering but sterile.

Split up into countless clans, that can now no more coalesce into a nation than, to resume our former metaphor, slags can unite into ore, they pass what time they are not actually employed in the care of their herds and horses, or, more rarely, in the cultivation of what grain may suffice their own immediate wants, in skirmishing with each other, and in free-booting raids on those around them. Of art, even in its simplest expressions, they have no skill, of knowledge no tincture.

These men, however, are they who, more than any others, hold the key of the East Turkish frontier; and

the doorkeeper, whatever he may be in himself, is always an important personage from his very position. That key the Koordes, though like the Ottoman race Soonnee Mahometans, are always ready to hand over, for a consideration, to the Sheea'ee Persian, or the Russian Giaour. This readiness of theirs they have showed in fact over and over again; nor ever more clearly than in the war of 1854–56, when they enjoyed the double satisfaction of alternately betraying either cause. Not that their own Mahometanism, though little exemplified in prayer or fast, is doubtful; but because the shortsightedness which they share with the generality of savages prevents them from appreciating the drift and consequences of their own deeds. In fact, they never thoroughly attained, and now are further than ever from, that national self-consciousness, that acknowledgment of obligations wider than mere family and clan, which is the foundation, if not the principal constituent, of any religion worthy the name. He whose mental and moral sphere extends no further than the relations of his own individuality, will naturally shape to himself an individual god or Fetish; the god of the mere clansman will be himself a strong clan-chief, the tutelary divinity of a tribe, not more. The common unity of mankind must be recognised before a god of all mankind can be worshipped; and the Universe as such, the harmonious Kosmos, must be, however dimly, apprehended before the idea of a Ruler of the Universe can be imaged in the mind. Thus the Koorde, while adopting the nomenclature of Mahometanism, fails to grasp the meaning: his 'Allah' is degraded from a universal to a particular god; his 'Islam' implies no brotherhood beyond that of his own clan, no ties beyond those limits: the title of 'Muslim,' one of more than Masonic

sympathy among Turks and Arabs, awakes in the Koorde little interest and commands no fidelity.

Very unlike the Koordish clans, the Turkoman pastoral tribes exhibit a decided tendency towards settlement and ulterior organisation. A comparatively slow, thick-headed race, they have in themselves first principles of industry, steadiness, and order unknown to their Carduchian neighbours. Hence, a colony of Turkoman shepherds easily glides upward by progressive amelioration into a collection of villages and villagers, and becomes in due time an additional element of strength, stability, and productiveness to the country.

Ignorant and rough these pastoral tribes naturally are, such conditions being inseparable from their mode of life. But they possess the capability of progressive civilisation; and herein lies the essential difference between them and what experience has thus far taught us of the Koordes. Another of their characteristics is superstition, and to the large admixture of Turkoman blood in the peasantry throughout Asia Minor, and some parts of Mesopotamia and Syria, may be in a measure attributed the favour extended to dervish practices and præter-Mahometan hagiolatry by the peasantry. In fine, the tendencies of the Turkoman hordes are, with due allowance for the modifications of temperament produced by a different occupation, nearly identical with those of the agricultural classes, and to them and what has been already said of them we accordingly refer. The prognostic is indeed a gloomy one for the empire, but has slight bearing on Islam itself.

What the Koordes are to the East and the Turkomans to the north and centre of the Mahometan Levant, the Bedouins or pastoral Arabs are to the west and

south. Few classes of men have been more frequently and more fully described in prose and verse, in narrative and fiction, nor need we in our present survey mount a camel, or eat one under a tent. But it is of importance to the right understanding of 'Bedouins' in the point of view from which we must here consider them, to mark the 'line of cleavage' running through their mass, and dividing it into two strata of very unequal value.

Many of the genuine or thorough-going Bedouins ('Arab-Bedoo' in their own phrase) are scarcely, if at all, Mahometans. Sun-worship, tree-worship—though without the accompanying serpent, these two symbols forming here at least by their disjunction an exception to a well-known theory of late years—grave-worship, any or no worship, are to be met among them. Yet a Bedouin, however vague or low his religious ideal, is rarely a savage in the common acceptation of the word. He has imagination, eloquence, vivacity, good taste, a great respect for human life (though coupled, unfortunately, with an even greater want of respect for human property), and, above all, he has a latent capability of becoming, under favourable circumstances, a social and even a civilised member of society, a fact of which many of the best families in Syria and 'Irak, whose ancestry can be undoubtedly traced back to 'Bedoo,' are sufficient proof. Qualities like these mark him out for a scion of the 'nobler races,' however a lawless and vagabond life may have degraded him in actual semblance. 'God's likeness,' but only a ground-plan. In the same manner 'Arab-Bedoo,' after having lost the practice of universals, often retain somewhat of the theory, and while living in the narrowest individuality, like Shanfaraor Ta'abbet-Shurran, are yet capable of apprehending a general idea, and of

expressing it. Accordingly, what Islam they chance to possess, when they possess it, is elevated and simple in type, and can even be evoked as 'a cause' when circumstances require it.

But the half-and-half nomad, the ''Arab-Deereh,' or 'Arab of the cultivated lands,' better, though less literally, rendered 'frontier-Bedouin,' is a very different creature. His summer encampment, never far removed from the habitations of the peasantry, has about it an air of comparative fixity and dirty comfort, that in some measure assimilates it to a village; while his winter quarters are often in the villages themselves, or even in the towns. He is in fine a Bedouin in the transition stage, on the road to become a civilised being, though not yet one. Seven or eight months of the year he tends his horses and asses, his sheep and camels, on the undulating grass-covered plains of the inland; with intervals of weeks, sometimes, especially during winter months, passed in the hamlets of the frontier lines; an unwelcome, troublesome, imperious guest, but easily put down by a steady front and a rough tongue. He has lived long enough with the 'Ahl-ul-Meder,' or 'inhabitants of bricks,' as he denominates peasant-folk and town-folk, to feel his own inferiority to them, and has learnt to regard with envy a lot in which his own laziness and desultory habits, the result of a half-savage life, do not yet allow him to participate. 'A peasant sleeps in his bed, with jars of butter and mollasses over his pillow,' we have heard the ''Arab-Deereh' say with an accent of bitter envy, while contrasting his own hot, dusty summer tents, and unfurnished winter hovels, with the comparative luxury of the neighbouring husbandman. But while contrast generates envy, envy at times results in imitation. Tents assume the more permanent character of hovels;

and hovels by degrees refine themselves into the decency of cottages. Next the land around shows signs of tillage, first patch-wise and after a desultory fashion; then lasting and regular; till by a complete conversion the Bedouin is metamorphosed into a villager. The reverse process, or that by which villagers degenerate into Bedouins, though much rarer, is not unknown.

These 'Arab-Deereh' are not only Mahometans, but, generally speaking, bigoted ones. The 'little learning' said to be dangerous, not because it is a little, but because it is not much, gives them a knowledge of Islam sufficient to render them devoted partisans, but not enough for larger views and philosophical toleration. Besides, even while acquiring more or less the stability and other social conditions of the peasantry, these Arabs long retain, indeed never wholly lose, something of their old vivacity and Bedouin fire. Hobbes may have been wrong or right when he assigned a state of war as the natural condition of primitive man; but that state is undeniably normal to the Bedouin genus, from Aden to Diar-Bekir. Accordingly a war-like creed, and such Islam pre-eminently is, chimes in with their first instincts; and they accept it not passively only, so to speak, but actively. For all other purposes the instability of the Desert cleaves to them through generations; and they are much more readily to be found on the side of turbulence than on that of order and submission. But whatever be the banner of the moment, they are always Mahometans to the backbone; not a whit the less so because their daily account of prayers is often sadly in arrears; their 'Ramadan' of uncertain observance; their women not over-scrupulously veiled; and their children occasionally uncircumcised.

The description now given holds good for the entire category of 'Arab-Deereh;' that is—putting aside

exaggeration, which in some narratives, Lamartine's for example, magnifies them into hosts worthy of a Xerxes —for about one hundred and sixty thousand male inhabitants of Syria and Mesopotamia. And in most of the qualities here assigned they differ widely, it is readily seen, from the ''Arab-Bedoo,' or real, absolute Bedouins of the same territory; whose number, variously estimated, seems to attain somewhat less than the double of the former. It may be well to notice, because furnishing the key to many seeming anomalies in tale and story, that the experiences of most Eastern travellers, stated by them to have occurred amongst and to be illustrative of Bedouin life, are really referable much more often to the ''Arab-Deereh' than to the ''Arab-Bedoo;' both being easily confounded by the stranger, and occasionally in loose parlance by the resident, under the generic denomination of 'Bedouin.' The two classes bear to each other, in fact, a dog and jackal affinity; but between the former and domesticated animal, which may stand for type of the 'Deereh,' and the latter wild beast, the appropriate emblem of the unreclaimed 'Bedoo,' there is a wide divergence. Should our readers desire a criterion: whenever mention is made in narrative of firearms, other than an occasional and particularly inefficient matchlock; wherever horses appear as the ordinary mount, and wherever Mahometanism is prominent in phrase or deed, the characters designated as 'Bedouins' were in reality, if so they existed otherwhere than in the writer's fancy, not 'Bedoo,' but 'Deereh.' Such were, to judge by the accounts given us, most of the 'Bedouins' who fought under the standard of 'Abd-el-Kadir; such certainly were the 'Moghrebins' who followed him to Syria; such were also those who rallied for a moment of shouting and gun-firing round Lady Hester Stanhope.

Accordingly, while the ''Arab-Bedoo' are of little imperial consequence, and any leader, or rather any paymaster, even a non-Islamitic one, might easily command their allegiance of an hour, the ''Arab-Deereh' must be counted as a real item in the calculations of any government, Mahometan or otherwise, that occupies or would occupy Syria.

Our land survey nears its end, and we turn seawards. Here our way comes on a class of more real importance than the widely-spread pastoral, yet one for centuries neglected, undeveloped, despised. We mean the coast or long-shore population. The merest glance at the map is enough to show that their numbers cannot but be considerable. The extent of waterline from the Turko-Russian frontier at Nicolaieff on the Black Sea to El-'Areesh on the Egyptian boundary would, if unravelled, considerably exceed two thousand miles, and the same glance that scans its length reveals its populousness in the multitude of villages that fringe it with their names. Nature, which has dealt out to this segment of the Asiatic coast in sadly parsimonious measure, harbours suited to the requirements of modern seamanship, to vessels of deep draught and iron-clads, has made atonement in some degree by a profuse liberality in little creeks or bays, excellently suited to shelter a fisherman's boat or a long-shore cruiser. Besides, the sea, whether by that name we denote the brackish waters of the Euxine or the intensely saline waves of the Mediterranean, swarms with fish, an additional incentive to human multiplication along its brink.

As for the larger maritime towns, Trebizond, Smyrna, Beyrout, and so forth, they have long since been, and are now more than ever, the resort by predilection of the Christian 'natives,' Greek and Armenian, especially

the former. The determining causes, many in number, of this confluence have some of them been explained elsewhere, while others lie beyond our present scope. The fact is notorious. But the same fact by no means holds good of the coast villages, where the population is, by a large majority, Mahometan.

That there is no better preparatory school for the mercantile marine than a fishing-boat, and no apter education for the imperial navy than the mercantile marine, may seem a truism; yet, if we may judge by the degree in which it has been neglected, this truism would be a discovery in some parts of the world, and particularly in Turkey. During the long era of the Abbaside Caliphs, and even till the latter days of the Turkoman and Seljook dynasties, no ruler of these countries would seem to have so much as thought of a navy. The first appearance of one, at least under a practical and somewhat organised form—for mere individual piracy was at no time wanting—precedes the establishment of the Ottoman power over Asia Minor by scarce a century. That power, which, with all its defects, yet for two full centuries ranked among the best organised of then existing empires, while it bestowed its chief attention on its land troops, the first standing army on the records of modern history, did not wholly neglect naval advantages. The Turkish marine, though never able to maintain an absolute supremacy over the Eastern seas, was yet a formidable rival to Venice and her allies; and if Europe can boast of Lepanto, Cheshmeh, and Navarino, Turkish annals record the names of Prevesa, Jerbeh, and Monderos with almost equal pride. But the Ottoman naval administration was, even at its best, too fitful and uneven for permanent results, and irregular success soon subsided into habitual depression and defeat. How-

ever, the 'material,' both men and means, spite of neglect and misuse, are still there, and the fishing and coast-traffic population of the Mahometan Levant might easily be rendered other than what they now are, a mere sum for the yearly census when taken.

But political, or, as they are sometimes styled, imperial considerations, are not our actual concern; and with this, as with other classes, the horizon of our survey is bounded by its social and Islamitic conditions. These are sufficiently interesting in the present instance.

Sea-coast men, however deficient their education and scant the 'scholards' among them, are, *cæteris paribus*, usually better informed and of livelier intelligence than the 'land-lubbers' of the interior. Nature, while offering to the latter only one page of her great book for perusal, opens two at least before the eyes of the former; often, by freer intercourse with distant lands, she unfolds at least a score. Brisk sea air and hourly changing skies may also have their influence on temperament: thus much is certain, that the shore has in all ages and in all countries been proportionally a breathing place for mind, and that new ideas, progress, and freedom have, as a rule, found better fortune within hearing of the breakers than where the circling sky rests on 'eternal hills' and monotonous plain. Athens and Genoa, Venice and Holland, not to mention England, have each in their turn, and after their fashion, illustrated this fact.

Now Mahomet, like all religious leaders, was at heart a Conservative; 'thus far and no farther' has always been the motto of the preaching tribe. 'Progress, but up to my standard; improvement, just so far as I warrant it,' is the language of every theological legislator from Buddha to Dr. Cullen; nor could the Arabian

Phœnix be expected to sing on a different note than the other birds of his feather. Accordingly, it is no wonder if tradition, 'se non vera, ben trovata,' ascribes to the Meccan Prophet a strong aversion to the sea and the pursuits connected with it; and fact does certainly imply some degree of uncongeniality between salt-water and Islam. M. Renan, who so ingeniously derives monotheism from the monotonous aspect of the Desert, and polytheism from the multitudinous life of fountain and forest, could doubtless account for this mental phenomenon also; but mere physical reasons, however plausible, cannot be accepted as wholly adequate in such matters; moral and social causes must also be taken into reckoning. What these latter are, the familiarity, theoretical or practical, of our English readers with a seafaring life, may excuse our dilating on. In the case now before us the result is, that though professionally and in all good faith Soonnee Mahometans, the fishermen and sailors of the Levant are, considered as a whole, less zealous, less attached to Islam, less imbued with its spirit than any other class, the 'Stamboollees' and Koordes alone excepted. Still they muster under the green banner, and proper discipline and worthy leaders would not fail even now to find among the crews of the Ottoman navy responsive energy and enthusiastic daring. But while the land army, or 'Nizam,' has made real and steady progress, and has especially kept itself free from the peculation that is the leprosy of a debilitated organism, little analogous can be said for the less fortunate Ottoman marine. For details we may safely refer our readers to the authority of Admiral Slade, a trusty witness and a kindly judge, equally well acquainted with the facts he signalises and with the causes that have produced them. Nor have the thirteen years since elapsed brought any

serious improvement either of principle or of practice to the Ottoman navy. Drunkenness, ignorance, and gross dishonesty still too frequently disgrace the officers; whilst the men suffer as before from all the evils, moral and physical, that the ill-conduct of their superiors naturally entails on them. Both Cheshmeh and Sinope witnessed the noblest deeds of Turkish self-devotion, courage, and patriotism; but they also witnessed a more than counterpoise of incapacity, mismanagement, and the deficiency of whatever should characterise officers, and be by them imparted to their men. May the present attempts at reform and improvement be more effectual than the past; they will be so if undertaken in earnest. Any how these three, the sea-faring population, the mercantile marine, and the imperial navy, form together a topic which ought to be one of the very first in the consideration of the Ottoman Government, as it is one of the first, if not the first itself, in importance.

Last of what may be termed the social 'specialities' of the Levant-Mahometan population comes the 'mixed multitude' of the camp—Circassians, Abkhasians, Zigeths, and other children of the Caucasus, now scattered thickly through large provinces of the Empire. Tatars, exiles from the Crimea and Kuban; Nogais, honest, flat-faced, hard-working fellows, from the Caspian shore; Cossacks, who have here taken refuge from their 'orthodox' brethren; negroes, mulattos, quadroons, octoroons, and every other tinge of African blood, from Darfour, Kordofan, Abyssinia, Nubia, and Heaven or Dr. Livingstone knows where else beside; all these have sought and found in one way or other a comfortable home in a country where popular opinion measures the individual by personal worth rather than by the circumstances of descent, and in a brotherhood

which merges colour and rank alike in the common dignity of Islam.

These men, the guests of the Levant, are all, as a rule, intensely Mahometan, though from different motives. The Caucasians, who a century since wavered on a doubtful limit between local paganism and Oriental Christianity, have been tutored into fervent Islam by Russian bayonets and an over-much proselytising invader. The Crimean and Nogai Tatars have also Christian wrongs to remember and to avenge. As for the negroes, they bring to Islam the same enthusiastic singleness of idea that they would have given to the Baptist, the Wesleyan, or any other suitable modification of Christianity, had their lines been cast in Jamaica or in the States. But all alike form a real accession, numerical and moral, to the Muslim cause, and infuse something of the convert ardour into the general mass. Half a million of such, to take them at the very least, are no despicable allies.

The same can, however, hardly be said of the proselytes properly so called, Hungarians, Poles, Italians, and other Europeans who have at various times and under various circumstances adopted the Osmanlee nationality and religion. Passive sincerity, and a belief that the system to which they have transferred themselves is for all essential purposes as good as that which they have left, is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the most and best that can be expected of them. Many have not even this. Others have, with a chivalrous love of adventure, and much aptitude for action, brought also with them wild unsettled characters, and habits incompatible with a prosperous career, drunkenness, for instance, most often, gambling sometimes. Still the 'refugee' list has to show some names of Asiatic no less than of European celebrity,

gallant souls, true to the red banner if not to the green, and hearts noble as any of their comrades who ever languished in an Austrian dungeon, or reddened the snows of Siberia with their blood. But the greater number flag early, and fade like full-grown trees on transplantation, and are soon nothing more than withered, sapless trunks, useless to others as to themselves. Few indeed, under any circumstances, are the Europeans gifted with the double vitality requisite for thriving in the new-adopted life of the East. Hungarians, perhaps from ancient affinities of race, seem to stand the best chance; Italians and Frenchmen the worst; Englishmen have been known to succeed; Scotchmen, it is said, still oftener.

With the remaining non-Christian and abnormal classes of the Ottoman Levant, Kizil-Bashes, Isma-'eeleeyeh, Druses, Mete'waleh, and their likes, who, while themselves in a real state of divergence, greater or lesser, from Islam, yet, on the whole, rank under its standard, and would in fact on a crisis rally round it sooner than round any other, we will not here occupy ourselves. These tribes or sects occupy a field apart, a wide field, often investigated, never thoroughly explored as yet, and to enter on which would lead us too far from our present track and goal.

Nor will we add a word regarding the actual administration of the Empire, executive, legal, and financial; nor will we speak of its pseudo-centralisation, nor of its sieve-like treasury, nor of its unrepresented people, nor of its irresponsible bureaucracy, nor of the palaces on the Bosporus, nor of favouritism, nor of the 'morbus Gallicus,' the itch of French imitation that has fastened itself upon every department, nor of 'bakhsheesh,' nor of 'bakalem' or 'we will see,' i. e. 'call again,' nor of any of these things. Our study is the Mahometan

man, not the government under which he lives; the inhabitants of the country, not its rulers, their ways and doings.

Taking, however, a retrospective view of the ground thus far traversed, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that, however imperfect or vicious a system Islam may be in itself, it is yet, in this part of the world at least, a thing by no means devoid of vitality; nay, one that may well live on to bury many of those who now confidently look forward to assisting at its funeral. It is also clear that, although the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, and the semi-Caliphate of the Stambool sultans, would undoubtedly be felt as a severe shock to the Mahometan world, that shock would be by no means necessarily, or even probably, fatal to Islam itself; perhaps might even, under the present circumstances, prove an advantage. A more vigorous hand than that of the effete Stambool-bred Effendees who now trail the sceptre of Osman, might bring together the scattered but glowing embers; a more vital breath might kindle them into a flame fierce as of old. Or, to change the metaphor, the materials lie ready to hand, and show few, if any, signs of disintegration; only the architect is feeble, decaying, wanting. That Constantinople is sick, the Ottoman Empire sick, no unprejudiced observer will deny; though he may, without any discredit to his right judgment, also hold that this sickness is not unto death; barring external violence, and the 'nimis cura medici,' the over-officious doctors. Some patients recover best when most left to themselves; and of such, perhaps, this empire is one. But with still less hesitation may he pronounce that Islam, taken apart from the Government, exhibits very few symptoms of sickness, and none at all of decrepitude; and that if either are to come upon her, they must come

from causes yet undeveloped and unknown. A time may indeed be in store when all dogmatic systems will disappear, all sectarian differences be obliterated before the communism of Humanity, and the Unity of Divine Order; but till then, and so long as the children of one Father shall call on that Father by different names, and the scholars of one Master repeat his lesson each diversely, we may with tolerable confidence assert that the 'Allah' of Arabia will not want worshippers, nor the Koran of its Prophet those who read, revere, and follow.

IV.

THE MAHOMETAN 'REVIVAL.'

(PUBLISHED IN 'FRASER'S MAGAZINE,' FEBRUARY, 1872.)

Mahomet said, 'Be joyful, be joyful; my followers are like rain, of which it is unknown whether the first or last fall will be best; or like a garden from which a multitude has been fed one year, and then another the next year, and perhaps the last is more numerous than the first, and better.'—*Miscat-ul-Masabeeh*, book xxiv.

NOTICE.

I WAS led to write this Essay by the perusal of Mr. W. W. Hunter's well-known book, *Our Indian Mussulmans*, to which it forms in a manner a kind of supplement or appendix. Its object is to show, calmly and without sensational exaggeration, how wide-spread and deep-rooted is the present 'revival' of Islam, particularly in that part of the world which may be looked on as its stronghold, the Asian Turkish Empire. Hence it is natural to infer with what caution and steadiness of statesmanship we should deport ourselves towards such manifestations of it as arise within the circle of our own dominion; though I have purposely abstained from specialized conclusions. A month after the Essay was written arrived the news of the assassination of Lord Mayo.

I will only add that, on careful revision, I find nothing to take away from the Article, though much might be added to it.

'WHAT we want is rather an increase of fanaticism than a diminution of it,' once said, in close conversation with a well-known English official, the late 'Aali Pasha,

then Prime Minister in name, as in fact, of the Ottoman Empire; and what 'Aali Pasha said, that he was in the habit not of meaning only, but also of doing his best to bring about.

Unquestionably, when discoursing with Europeans, especially if of high rank and station, 'Aali was apt to hold a very different language, that, in fact, which has for many years been the stereotyped conciliatory phraseology of external Ottoman diplomacy; but on the occasion mentioned, he, for reasons known to himself and to him, whom he addressed, cast aside the conventional mask, and spoke what he really thought and felt. Yet few statesmen ever better understood than he how much it imports to sail, when possible, with, not against the tide; and in this instance he had certainly, long before, well thought out his purposed line of action, and knew that the current was fully set in the direction which he himself then and there indicated and desired. This current was no other than that of the great Mahometan 'Revival,' now running high, whether it be between the broad banks of Ottoman rule, or among the outlying waters of the lesser states and colonies of Islam.

Our own Government, part-heir of the liabilities as well as of the wealth of Asia, has felt with some anxiety the sympathetic rise of level all over the Mahometan surface, Soonnee or Sheea'h, but especially the former, throughout our East Indian dominions; and the extent of Mûslim disaffection to infidel supremacy, with the causes, special or general, that have contributed to maintain or excite it, have been ably set forth by one of our best Peninsular writers, Mr. Hunter, in his recent work, *Our Indian Mussulmans.*

These causes, many in number, may be ultimately reduced, so far as India is concerned, to two: one, the

direct and aggressive action of Wahhabeeism preached throughout the Northern Provinces, by the missionaries of that sect, if indeed sect it can rightly be called; an action hostile not to Christian or European dominion only, but to every high thing that exalts itself against what the followers of 'Abd-el-Wahhab conceive to be the purity of Islam; the other cause indirect, being, if rightly summed up, nothing else than that the Mahometans of India have passed from the conditions of a ruling to those of a subject race; and have, as such, had to endure the consequences partly of a want of pliability on their side, partly of some neglect and even unfairness, not to give it too harsh a name, on ours.

All this is clearly and convincingly stated by the talented writer above mentioned, in a manner sufficient for the limits of his observation and his work, which is exclusively concerned with the Indian problem. But it is curious that most of what he has written is, *mutatis mutandis*, applicable in great measure to a very different Empire, namely, the Ottoman, where, east of the Bosporus, similar causes have given rise to similar difficulties, and have necessitated measures bearing a considerable resemblance to some of those suggested by Mr. Hunter, for the disentanglement of our own knots. The topic is an interesting one; and its investigation can hardly fail to be, not exactly instructive, perhaps, but certainly suggestive. Let us, accordingly, cross the bounds of the present century and the Himalaya, and extend our survey over times reaching further back than Assaye or Plassy, and to lands beyond the Indian Ocean and the Sea of Hejaz.

A hundred years back, and he who, looking widely down on the then enormous geographical tract of Islam, and in particular on its choicest garden, the Turkish Empire, should have predicted the near disintegration

and decay, there and elsewhere, of everything like Mahometan organisation and system, would hardly have deserved the rebuke of rashness for his prophecy. The dawn of multiplied nationalities, some indifferent, some alien, some even hostile to the system and ideal of Islam, was flashing up on the horizon; and before their mingled rays the old symbol of the Crescent seemed destined to fade away and disappear. The semi-Arab revolt under 'Alee Beg the Georgian, with the avowed Christian sympathies and secret Russian alliances of its leaders, had almost rent Egypt and Syria from the map of the 'faithful;' the varied populations of Roumania, Servia, and Greece had each become conscious of their growing strength, and were already maturing, within themselves and without, those fierce outbreaks against Mahometan supremacy which marked the opening of the modern epoch; while in Anatolia itself, in Koordistan, 'Irak, and the frontier-lands of the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Tigris, a chaos of indigenous Dereh-Begs, Ameers, and Sheykhs, reigned lawless and supreme; and, with one sole exception, that namely of the Choban-Oghloo family of Yuzgat, were not less noted for their laxity in Islam, both theory and practice, than for their daring rebellion against its acknowledged, and so to speak, official head, the Sultan of Constantinople. Even where the 'Chaliph' and the Kura'n retained their apparent, they had lost their real supremacy. Throughout the great Empire, Turkish or Turkoman, Koorde, Arab, or Moor, the most distinctive precepts of 'the Book' were publicly set at nought, nowhere more so than in Constantinople itself; nor were the sacred cities themselves, Mecca and Medineh, much better. The wine-taverns of the Janissaries, the rakee-shops of the citizens, the prostitutes of the Hejaz, and the 'Be-lillahs'—'sons of Belial,' we may not

unaptly translate the name—of Bagdad and Cairo, had become recognised institutions; opium-eating, too, was next to universal: the mosques stood unfrequented and ruinous; while the public schools and colleges of Mahometan law and dogma had fallen into dreary decay, or feebly languished on amid poverty and neglect. An eclipse, total it seemed, had overspread the Crescent, of which a dim and darkened outline alone remained visible, foreboding disaster and extinction.

Pass a hundred years, and a change has indeed come over the spirit of the Eastern dream. The great reactionary movement, the 'Revival,' originated where scarce a spark of life had been left, by the too-famous 'Abd-el-Wahhab, in the land of Nejd, has gradually but surely extended itself over the entire surface and through all the length and depth of Islam; while the ever-increasing pressure of the Christian, or, at least, non-Mahometan, West, has intensified the 'fanatical' tendency, even where it has modified its special direction. For 'Islam' is a political not less than a religious whole; and the comparative feebleness of the dogmatic element of its composition in some quarters—in Northern and Western Turkey, for instance—is amply compensated for by a greater strength of social and administrative cohesion in those regions. It is hardly a metaphor to say, that the religious and the civil systems of Mahometanism are nothing else than two sides of the same medal; and it does not matter much for its uses which lies uppermost.

'The signs of the times.' In the East Ottoman Empire—that is, in those very countries whence emanate the influences which, for good or for evil, most surely and most effectually communicate themselves to and permeate the Mahometan populations beyond the Indus—such signs are not wanting; and

all point in one direction. I pass over, because well known to every reader, the yet unbroken vehemence of Arab Wahhabeeism, and its recent aggressive attempts, and come to some less noticed, because less suddenly startling, but in reality more deeply significant, indications of 'Revival' in Oriental Turkey. And, certainly, these indications are of more importance to us, the rulers of twenty millions of Mahometans, and to the world in general, than the fierce intolerance itself of 'Abd-Allah-Ebn-Feysul and his restless 'Metowwa's,' because they are connected, not with special but universal, not with transient but permanent causes of grievance and strife. I will content myself with stating a few remarkable facts, leaving collateral incidents and results to inference or minuter observation.

The first is the recent modification of the non-denominational or 'Rushdee' public schools.

These schools were, as everybody is aware, established under official influence and patronage, and partly with the aid of official subsidies, some twenty years since, in every considerable town or centre, agricultural or mercantile, over the face of the East Ottoman Empire. Their avowed object was the promotion of a purely secular and 'non-denominational' education. The 'course' pursued in them, at their first institution, consisted partly of languages, amongst which those of European family, especially French, held the foremost place; partly of general history, mathematics, natural sciences, and the like. They were intended for, and during some time were in fact frequented by the children of the middle and upper class Christian parents no less than of Mahometan, without distinction of sect or dogma; and their ultimate scope was to qualify the rising generation, of whatever religion or race, for a closer and more amicable contact with the people and

the ideas of the West—a contact based on wider knowledge, and tending to culminate in intellectual and moral fusion.

This was twenty, fifteen, years since. But, strange to say, stranger still to see, there are now throughout the Ottoman provinces no stricter 'denominational,' that is, Muslim schools, than these very 'Rushdee' institutions; and if we poll the lads who attend them, and they are many, we shall scarcely find among a hundred turbaned scholars one single child of Christian creed or parentage. The education of the 'Rushdee' college so wide in its original programme, has in almost every instance without the walls of the capital, or rather of Europeanised Pera, restricted itself to the study of the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian languages, with grammar and logic in accordance, 'Nahoo' and 'Muntik;' to the authors who treat of Eastern, that is Mahometan history, institutions and laws, to the physics of Kazweenee, and the geography of Masa'oodee; European tongues, European learning, European sciences have dwindled to absolute extinction; they have departed without being desired, and no one seeks after them or regrets. Masters, pupils, and teaching alike, let alone prayers, usages, and all the daily or weekly accessories of school education, are, in nineteen cases out of twenty, as thoroughly and emphatically Mahometan as an 'Omar or an Othman himself could desire; all else is combated or ignored, the training and the trained are once more on the narrow line of Islam, and Islam only. By whom precisely and how this change was effected, needs not here to investigate; but the fact, the 'sign,' is there.

Another sign, one certainly good in itself, but questionable in its ulterior purport, is the great diminution in the use, or rather abuse, of fermented and alcoholic liquors among the Mahometan populations, high and

low, from the shores of the Bosporus to the 'river of Egypt.' It would be superfluous to call to mention the strictly prohibitive precepts of both Kura'n and Hadeeth in this matter, or the continually recurring violation of those precepts which every page of Eastern history, from the reign of the Omeyyad Chaliphs downwards, bear witness to. But it is worthy of note that an increasing or decreasing non-observance of this distinctive law has been at all times a kind of thermometrical test of the degree of Mahometan fervour at large; and that each period of failing and decadence—and Islam has gone through many such—has been invariably signalized by a public and audacious breach of the negative commandment. Thus, for example, it fell out in the dark decline of the Abbaside Chaliphate; thus again in the distracted epoch that preceded the establishment of the Fatimite dynasty in Egypt; thus it was in the appalling chaos of Ottoman disorder and decay whence the Empire was in part upraised by the Küprilee administration. While, on the contrary, the abandonment, or even the total, though in general only, temporary closing of the wine and spirit shops has regularly coincided with a renewal of that religious zeal which forms the supplement of patriotic and national vitality in the East.

Now the most superficial observer can hardly fail to be struck by the difference which has arisen in this respect between the Turkish—I use the word in its imperial sense—Mahometans of 1871 and those of only thirty years since. The Turkish soldier is now as eminent in his abstemious sobriety as his predecessor, the Janissary, was in his shameless drunkenness; the Turkish sailor has abandoned the grog-shop to the Maltee, the Levantine, and the Greek; the Turkish—not unwashed, for an unwashed Mahometan is a

contradiction in terms, but he whose rank and station in town or village would correspond to our unwashed, no longer spends his chance piastre on a glass of rakee and his night in the lock-up. Twice each year the great Mahometan festivals turn the entire Turkish population out to three or four days of continuous idleness and amusement, yet no extra duty necessitated by popular insobriety devolves on the patrol and police force—a fact rendered still more remarkable by the contrast afforded in this respect on the recurrence of the drunken Christian festivals about Easter and the New Year. This abstinence, the heads of the district police have repeatedly assured me, was by no means the rule twenty years since. Even the educated, or, so to speak, modernised *alla Franca* Turk, however lax he may be in other respects, is as shy of indulging in, and as anxious to conceal any propensity he may have to forbidden drinks, as he was formerly ostentatious, and, after a manner, insolent in his display of their abuse; and the few of this class who might come under the provisions of a 'Habitual Drunkard's Act,' did such exist in Turkey, are, with hardly an exception, elderly men, whose habit dates from a generation now almost passed away, and whom I have often heard grumbling at the novel strictness which, in public as in private festivities, has substituted water, or at least coffee, for the customary wine and spirits of former times. Egypt alone would seem, if accounts be correct, to form in this particular an exception to the general law of Mahometan progress, or retrogression; yet even in Egypt my own observation would lead me to think that the westward and alcoholic tendencies of its upper classes and rulers are only superficial, and find little or no correspondence among the masses.

Akin to this change is the exacter observance of

Ramadan. Travellers' books—*Eōthen* among the rest, if I remember rightly—used to abound in amusing tales of the tricks and evasions to which Mahometans of all classes were said to resort in order to elude the penance of the monthly fast. If these tales were once true, or at least had their foundation in truth, they certainly are quite obsolete now-a-days. High and low, the Stamboolee Field-Marshal Pasha, and the ragged 'kaikjee' or boatman, alike go through the respective labours, sedentary or active, of their weary day, unrefreshed by food, drink, or smoke, in equal self-denial, discomfort, and piety; and even when welcome night has fallen, few in the midst of their merriment omit attendance at the interminable 'Terawēēh' or prayer-recitals of the mosque, peculiar to the season; while countless private devotions and Kura'n-readings claim a lion's share of the vacant hours. That, after all these, the Muslim finds no less pleasure in attendance at the licentious spectacles of the 'Karaguz,' or still more licentious doings of certain other places of resort, where the theory that coffee acts as a check on the grosser passions of men finds a too practical refutation, no way proves laxity in his faith; followers of Islam, like those of every other known creed, being always ready to

> Compound for sins that they're inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to;

orthodoxy here, as elsewhere, covering the multitude of what may be termed, in one respect, 'compatible' transgressions.

A third, and, in its way, a very important 'sign,' is the progressive diminution in the number of Europeans, and, indeed, of Christians generally, in Turkish employment, particularly in the Military and Public Works Departments. Twenty years ago, to be a

Frenchman, an Italian, a Hungarian, or a Pole, was almost a sufficient title in itself for a good post, a high salary, and a sure advancement in the Ottoman service, where 'wanted, a Christian, and if possible a European,' seemed to be the stereotyped advertisements of request. The numerous works, or at any rate, concessions of roads, bridges, landing-places, and the like, were hence almost wholly in the hands or under the direction of French adventurers and Polish refugees, so much so, indeed, that to the mismanagement, dishonesty, or incompetence of these very men may be not unfairly attributed much of the general absence of solid progress in these undertakings; the Mining and Forest Departments had a manifest tendency to follow in the same direction, only that here 'Native Christians,' Greek or Armenian, have established a preference. Meanwhile, the various branches of the medical profession were the favourite experiment-field of Italian quackery; while Hungarians, Croatians, and their like, gravitated towards military and adminstrative employments.

Turn to the present day, and we see the foreign element in one and all of these departments undergoing a rapid process of elimination by the Turkish, the Christian by the Mussulman. The great military road just completed,—after a fashion, it is true,—between Trebizond and Erzeroom, a work five years back wholly French, has, long before its termination, passed into exclusively Turkish hands; the only Christian engineer retained on it to the end having been a native Armenian; the harbour works, civil or military, along the south Black Sea coast have followed suit; while the concessions for similar undertakings promised or made to Europeans elsewhere are, so far as may be, persistently thwarted or nullified in their execution.

Turkish doctors more and more replace, nor disadvantageously, the normal Italian practitioner; while in the army the growing intensity of Mahometan spirit and practice leaves but a narrow and an uncomfortable berth for any one who does not regulate his life, professedly at least, by the precepts of the Kura'n and the Sunneh. In a word, the tendency to exclude Europeans, and, where possible, native Christians, from the ranks of service and public employment, is not less marked than was the eagerness to make use of them and to bring them forward a century ago. That the Turks, once pupils in mechanical art, have latterly become, or think that they have become, masters, may be accepted as part explanation; but the tone adopted on these matters by Mahometan officials leaves no doubt that more is to be ascribed to the 'purism' of revived Islam, and its jealousy of rivalry or admixture.

Lastly, every traveller throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Koordistan, was formerly expected to note in his journal and transfer to print remarks, not wholly then unjustified by facts, on the declining energies of Islam, evinced by decaying mosques, abandoned schools, and ruined buildings of public hospitality or charity. Much of this kind of book 'stuffing' was, indeed, due to misconception and exaggeration, still the deficiency of new religious educational constructions during the first half of the present century must have been real, inasmuch as it is noticeable even after this lapse of time.

But were I, on the other hand, to attempt the catalogue of mosques, colleges, schools, chapels, and the like, repaired or wholly fresh-built in the last fifteen years within the circle of my own personal inspection alone, several pages would hardly suffice to contain it. Trebizond, Batoom, Samsoon, Sivas, Keysareeyah,

Chorum, Amasia, and fifty other towns of names unknown, or barely known, in Europe, each can boast its new or renovated places of Mahometan worship; new schools, some of law, others of grammar, others primary, have sprung up on every side; new works of charity and public bequest adorn the highways. The 'wakoof,' or mosque-lands, have latterly become a frequent subject of official or semi-official enquiry; not in the view of resumption or confiscation, but of a better and more efficacious administration to the ends for which they were originally set apart. Meanwhile, year after year sees a steady increase in the number of pilgrims to the holy places of Islam; and, although the greater facilitation consequent on steam has undoubtedly contributed not a little to this result, much must also be put down to the growing eagerness manifested by all, high and low, to visit the sacred soil, the birthplace of their religion and Prophet; while the pride that each town or village takes in its 'hajjees' is manifested in the all-engrossing sympathy that accompanies their departure, and the triumphant exultation of the entire populace that welcomes them home. It may not have been less a thousand years ago: it certainly could not have been more.

Other 'signs of the times' might be added, but they can be fairly reduced to the four already given, or conjectured from them; and all combine in witnessing to the energy and the breadth of the Mahometan 'revival.' Enough to say, that from 'him that sitteth upon the throne,' the Sultan of Constantinople, 'Abd-el-'Azeez himself, down to the poorest 'hammal' or street-porter on the wharves, it embraces every class, every nationality within the Ottoman Empire, north and south, Turks, Turkomans, Koordes, Arabs, with their respective sub-branches and cross-races; that the

recent Circassian exiles, who, on their first arrival, hardly knew a morning prayer or a verse of the Kurá'n, are now in Muslim exactitude and fervour inferior to none; and that while all the temporal advantages offered by European protection and support, not to mention the direct persuasion and indirect subsidy of well-to-do missionaries, can scarcely, or indeed more truly not at all, procure a single convert from Islam to any form of Christianity, Greek, Armenian, Catholic, or Protestant, on the other hand a reverse process yearly enrolls a very sensible number from one or another, or all of these sects, under the unity of the Green Banner. This in Turkish Asia; while from Africa reports reach us of whole Negro tribes abandoning their hereditary fetich for the religion called of Abraham; and, after all due allowance made for distance and exaggeration, the current idea, that the Libyan Peninsula will soon be, what its best portions in North and East already are, a land of Islam, seems by no means destitute of probability.

To sum up, Mahometan fervour has first been thoroughly rekindled within the limits which its half-extinguished ashes covered a hundred years ago; and, next, the increased heat has, by a natural law, extended over whatever lies nearest to but beyond the former circumference.

Now all this should be borne in mind when we take counsel on our Indo-Mahometan subjects; and we should accustom ourselves to look on them, not as an isolated clique, girt in by our power, our institution, and, if need be, our bayonets, but as part and parcel of the great brotherhood that radiates, so to speak, from Mecca, as from its centre, to the shores beaten by the wild waves of the Atlantic on the West, and to the coral-reefs of the Pacific on the East; from

the confine-steppes of frozen Siberia, to the banana groves of the Malay Archipelago. With more justice than the first converts of Christianity, the Muslim may boast that 'the multitude of them that believe are of one heart and of one soul;' loss or gain are reckoned among them in common, the grievance of one is the grievance of all; and the enemy of one frontier is hated up to, and, where possible, assailed from the most distant other.

So strong, indeed, is the bond of union supplied by the very name of Islam, even where that name covers the most divergent principles and beliefs, that, in presence of the 'infidel,' the deep clefts which divide Soonnee and Shee'ah are for a time and purpose obliterated; and the most heretical sects become awhile amalgamated with the most uncompromisingly orthodox, who, in another cause, would naturally reject and disavow them. Very curious in this respect is the evidence afforded by Mr. Hunter; nowhere more so than in the light he throws, almost unconsciously it would seem, on the true character of the so-called Wahhabee movement, spreading from the Rebel Camp of Sittana to Lower Bengal, and re-concentrating itself in the centres of Maldah, and at Patna in particular. Here we have the most simple and rigid form that Islam has ever assumed, namely, the puritanical Unitarianism of the Nejdean Wahhabee, combined with all that the Nejdean Wahhabee as such would most condemn: I mean the superstitious belief in a coming 'Mahdee,' the idea of personal and, so to speak, corporeal virtue and holy efficacy in the 'Imam' of the day; and, lastly, with the organised practice of private assassination, a practice long held for distinctive of the freethinking Isma'eleeyeh, and their kindred sects among the Rafidee heretics. How far the typical Wahhabees of Arabia are

from these credences and usages myself can best testify. At Riad I have repeatedly heard the abhorrent phrases with which, almost under breath, as men speaking of something too horrible to mention, my friends characterised the idolatrous reverence of the Persian 'Wakeel,' then resident in the town, for his expected 'Mahdee,' a title reserved by the Kura'n exclusively to God alone. And, for what regards the Imamat, I have twice, once in the village of Rowdah on the frontier of Woshem, once in the town of Jelajil, in the most orthodox province of Sedeyr, been myself invested for the nonce with the character and duties of Imam, and as such have conducted the customary congregational worship. Yet no townsman or villager, then gathered in the mosque, was so deluded as to ascribe to me the very least personal sanctity or spiritual superiority of any kind. I was in their eyes a Muslim, of general good character, not in debt, and of a more than average acquaintance with the Kura'n and the stated forms of prayer; and this was all that was required in my instance, as it would have been in any other throughout Nejd. As to the assassinations recorded in my Central Arabian History, and the subsequent murder of blind old Feysul, these were due not to Wahhabeeism, but to private revenge or external causes. But in India, and most notably on its North-Western frontier, the Shee'ah superstitions of Imam and 'Mahdee,' with the secret association and murderous practices of the Isma'eleeyeh, or assassins, so long established in the neighbourhood of these very provinces (A.D. 1000–1200 circiter), and not improbably, as I have heard suggested on excellent authority, still maintaining an underhand existence there, have all combined together, and been toughly welded into one formidable weapon of attack on the common foe, the uncircumcised infidel of the land,

governing or governed. But how fervent must be the Islamitic glow required for such a welding, let testify the hopeless failure of analogous attempts made age by age to bind in one the sundered branches of Christianity; and Greeks and Catholics at internecine war within the walls of Constantinople, while Mahomet II with his monster artillery thundered at the gates.

This is no light thing; Islam is even now an enormous power, full of self-sustaining vitality, with a surplus for aggression; and a struggle with its combined energies would be deadly indeed. Yet we, at any rate, have no need for nervous alarm, nor will its quarrel, even partially, be with us and our Empire, so long as we are consistently faithful to the practical wisdom of our predecessors, that best of legacies bequeathed us by the old East India Company.

Here a word may not unsuitably find place on the very shortsighted policy which, for the sake of a little present saving, or to satisfy the ever-craving mania of 'paring down,' would reduce to a mere nothing our most effective foreign representation, that is, our Consular, in those very countries from the shores of the Black Sea to those of the Hejaz, which are in an eminent degree the focus of growing heat, and, it is far from improbable, of future conflagration. To obtain a trustworthy and accurate knowledge of the patient's pulse, a fugitive visit and an inexperienced hand are either insufficient; and to ensure full and reliable information as to the conditions of Mahometan excitement in the Asiatic districts, not less than to acquire a certain ascendancy of position which may render that excitement, if not wholly innocuous, at least less injurious to ourselves, men of more than average power and cultivation are required; and, it might seem superfluous in the case of any other profession to remark, such men

are not to be had for nothing. The imprudent ignorance of an unqualified British resident appointed for any other motive than for suitableness, acquired by patient study or experience to the post he has been designated to fill; the intriguing restlessness of a Levantine or a Maltee, decorated with the British Consular title, at Jiddah or Damascus,—and an inadequate salary or fortuitous patronage often implies something of this kind, or worse,—may suffice to endanger not only our own immediate interests at those very places, but may even by its results compromise the enormous and tangible stake of our Indian possessions.

But most idle, however seemingly shrewd it may be, is the policy that would virtually sever our Indian from our Imperial Government, and, while drawing between the two an unreal line of demarcation, would refuse to burden, as the phrase goes, the latter with the most trifling measure, the most fractional expense, referable, even indirectly, to the advantage and benefit of the former. Islam is one; the British Empire, too, is one: and though a numerous class of purely local, or, it might be expressed, municipal outlays ought to be and are properly referable to India and its administration alone, yet rulers should remember that in the wider category of cause and effect, reaching to the very existence of our Indian dominion, that dominion, in virtue of which more than aught else we are what we are, their solicitude ought not to be limited by the Bay of Bengal on the one side and the Persian Gulf on the other; no, nor even the Red Sea. That this proposition has a special significance where Islam and its followers are concerned, my readers will have already perceived, or I have written to very little purpose.

But to return to the universal 'revival' itself: to what cause or causes shall we ascribe it? and is the movement transient in its nature or likely to last? and

what difficulties or disturbances has it already produced, or may yet produce, in the existing order of things, that is, outside of India? For with its immediate results in India Mr. Hunter has made us sufficiently acquainted. Those who have paid attention to the somewhat analogous rejuvenescence, if the phrase be allowed, of Christianity, and more particularly Catholicism, in the West, during the same period of time, that is, the last hundred years, might be almost tempted to ascribe both of these simultaneous phases of human thought to some unseen, powerful Influence—some all-pervading 'Weltgeist,' or at least 'Zeitgeist'—thus manifesting his action on our common race in Asia as in Europe. But we can easily find more visible and definite agencies at work in the present renovation of Islam.

The first is, undoubtedly, the Wahhabeeism of Nejd. However hostile in itself the ordinary practices and received opinions of the 'Soonnee,' or orthodox body, hostile, too, to the Turkish sceptre and to Ottoman organisation, yet the zeal it contains for the cause of Islam in general, and the immense energy of its pure Monotheism, have not failed to arouse corresponding feelings and sympathies even among those who, in other respects, are its professed enemies, and to make half-conquests where denied a complete victory. For certainly, political and national considerations apart, apart also from the speciality of non-smoking, and some other trifles of the same description, no genuine Mahometan but must feel that the doctrines of 'Abd-el-Wahhab are in very truth the doctrines of the Kura'n and the Prophet. Accordingly, the whole school of Islamitic teaching has, while denouncing them in one phase, accepted and been modified by them under another; and men at large have learned to set a higher value on

Islam, of which they have thus re-perceived the dignity. Not the common people only, but many of the highest and best educated classes, even the Sultan himself among the number, are distinctly inclined to the stricter school, and so are most of the principal doctors and teachers throughout the Ottoman East, as he will find who visits the 'Medresehs' at Of, Koniah, Damascus, Gaza, and even Mosool. Much in the same way as Protestantism in the sixteenth century, though unable wholly to overthrow Romanism, yet exerted a real and penetrating influence on it, and wrought the indirect reform of many an abuse that it could not reach and crush face to face, so has the Wahhabeeism of our own times modified and purified the very system it condemns, and spread its own tinge over the entire surface of Islam.

A second cause is European pressure. The Mahometan populations of the East have of late years fully awakened to the manifold strength and skill of their Western Christian rivals; and this awakening, at first productive of respect and fear, not unmixed with admiration, now wears the type of antagonistic dislike, and even of intelligent hate. No more zealous Mahometans, no more exclusive 'Unitarians,' to adopt their own phrase, are to be found in all the ranks of Islam than they who have sojourned the longest in Europe, and acquired the most intimate knowledge of its sciences and its ways. It is a mistake, common among Europeans, universal among Frenchmen, to imagine that Asiatic Mahometans esteem or desire them the more for their mechanical, artistic, or inventive skill. Railroads, steam-engines, telegraphs, and the like, excite now indeed no prejudice, and are, where circumstances favour, willingly adopted; but their inventors are not thought one atom the better of for all these

things; while, on the other side of the account, Mahometans are keenly alive to the ever-shifting uncertainties and divisions that distract the Christianity of the day, and to the woeful instability of modern European institutions. From their own point of view, Muslims are as men standing on a secure rock, and surveying the ships driven hither and thither on the stormy seas around; and they complacently—shall we say, unreasonably?—contrast the quiet fixity of their own position with the unsettled and insecure restlessness of all else.

Islam, rightly understood, is neither so flexible nor so inflexible as outsiders would have it. It can heartily admit all introduction of material improvement and comfort, and has no serious objection, special causes apart, to any given form of dress or habitation, of science or government. But Western speculation and utilitarian positivism run off from it like rain from a waterproof; while, again, on the point which its followers hold to be inherent and essential to their creed and to the social relations necessarily deduced from it, they neither know how to change, nor will. I praise not, as I blame not; but the facts are so.

Mr. Hunter mentions the effect lately produced at Calcutta by the speech of a venerable Sheykh, Ahmed Effendee Ansaree by name, who recounted to an attentive audience of Indo-Mahometans the favourable impressions produced on his mind during a visit to Constantinople; and dwelt more especially on the intimate alliance and mutual good-will existing, said the Sheykh, between the Ottoman Sultan and the English nation. Ahmed Effendee was a stranger and a guest, seeing the outside of a capital city, and coming in contact mainly, it would seem, with the quietest and best of its inhabitants; but had he fre-

quented the inner provinces, and lodged under the roofs of dispossessed Dereh-Begs and their descendants, his picture might, I fear, have exhibited fewer lights and more shades. Anyhow, it was well that he spoke as he did; had he spoken otherwise he would have deserved little commendation. But it is also well that we, who are neither Indians nor Mussulmans, should understand how much there was of truth in his account, how much of error. Thus far was error; that any real sympathy or stability of friendship on intrinsic motives has ever existed or exists between the two tribes, the Asiatic and the European; the good-will of Turkey and England is one merely of mutual advantages, real or supposed; and its intensity and duration are to be measured by those advantages alone. But the Sheykh's narration contained a truth, and a most valuable truth, namely, that the tolerance, the justice, and the steady adherence to our given word, which have, on the whole, characterised us in our dealings with Turkey and the East, let cynics and rhetoricians say what they list, have not indeed rendered us the brothers, but have thus far removed us from the category of the enemies, of Islam. And, it is no less certain that, even without the support, valuable though it really is, of 'Fatwahs' and 'Ilans,' so long as we thus rule India, in toleration, in justice, and truth, that country will always be to the genuine Muslim, if not 'Dar Islam,' yet not 'Dar Harb' either, but 'Dar Amān;' an abode where the 'faithful' may dwell in surety of conscience as of right; and feel well assured, even with the 'Hadeeth' open before their eyes, and the Kura'n in their ears, that they nowise imperil their heritage of milk, honey, and 'kawther' in the next world, by enjoying the peaceful blessings of this, under British protection, whatever may in strict Mahometan

credence be the future allotment of the Britons themselves in the Day of Decision.

But, this 'Revival,' is it of a transient nature, or permanent? Let those who can argue from causes to effects, look at the former, here faithfully assigned, and then pronounce on the probable character of the latter. Doubtless, no creed, no articled system, can be absolutely lasting upon earth; and the means which Muslims, Christians, and whoever else, revere, will in their turn pass away and be superseded. But of all the forms and systems now extant, none has, it would seem, a greater intrinsic power of resistance and persistence than Islam; and every 'Revival' necessarily partakes in its measure of the durability of that which is revived.

The Ottoman Government has felt this, and has shaped its course accordingly. Threatened by dangers and embarrassed by difficulties not much unlike those which we have latterly experienced in India, they have met them by a statesmanship, part of which may be taken as a direct hint or landmark to ourselves, part, as it stands, inapplicable to us, yet suggestive of what might be done by us or left undone east of the Indus.

Thus, for instance, while we have had our Sittana camp and its fanatics, Nejd and its warlike Wahhabees have played a not wholly dissimilar part on the Ottoman frontier. To these uncompromising foes the Turks have steadily shown themselves equally uncompromising adversaries, with no alternative to propose, but submission or the sword;—and God forbid that we should be more milky to the rebels of the North-West, or ever offer any other alternative than obedience or death to the avowed enemies and rebels of our Empire.

But with Wahhabees and assassins the course is clear. Setting these aside, we come to the more complicated questions which regard the staple, and in ordinary

circumstances peaceably disposed Mahometan population. This, too, in Asia Minor, Syria, and throughout the East Ottoman territory, has, with its religious 'Revival,' learned to feel and to repine against its grievances; and these grievances, curious to note, have borne an unmistakable resemblance to those of our own Indo-Mahometans, whose cause has been so ably and judiciously pleaded by Mr. Hunter in the concluding chapter of his work. Old families, once rulers, now decaying in discouragement and neglect; education diverted from its former Muslim channel into courses more or less incompatible with Islam; careers once open to the true 'believer' only, but from which he now finds himself pointedly excluded; public funds once destined primarily and chiefly for the maintenance of the 'straight faith,' and its lore, now turned aside to other and even to hostile purposes; the whole current of official patronage and favour set in a direction diametrically counter to Islam; last and worst of all, Muslim law, the law based on the Soonnah, Hadeeth, and Kura'n, and as intimately and vitally connected with them as a tree with its roots, superseded by codes and courts of 'infidel' origin, and at times of 'infidel' members and ways of practice. None of these were wanting in the Turkey of 1830–54; and, though to every accusation a solid cause might have been assigned and a plausible answer given, yet from a Mahometan point of view the cause would have seemed insufficient, the answer unsatisfactory, while the accusation and the grievance would still remain heavy and real.

A little more, another Sultan on the throne like 'Abd-el-Mejeed, another minister at the head of the Divan like Resheed Pasha; and a crisis could hardly have been averted. The general 'Revival' was going on and strengthening; the not less general discontent

was ripening here and there into conspiracy; and the *alla Franca* barriers of the modernised Stambool organisation were openly menaced by the advancing tide. But the Osmanlee is rarely taken at fault; and though slow to move is sure; 'The lame donkey,' says the Arab alluding to Turkish policy, 'ends by catching the hare.' The Crimean war and its successes, real at the time for the Ottoman Empire, brought for a space a seasonable diversion of feeling; and before that had passed away 'Abd-el-Azeez was Sultan, and the ship of state trimmed her sails to the breeze anew rising into a gale.

How the educational difficulty was got rid of, we have already seen at the outset of this article; all that now remains to add on the subject is, that, although the transformation of the non-denominational or 'infidel' into denominational or Muslim schools, was in great measure the spontaneous result of widespread popular feeling, and the necessity of things, yet the Government bore its share in the change, not only passively by the absence of all opposition, but also actively by quietly encouraging it through its servants and officials. Christians of every sect, Greeks, Armenians, and what else, continued to give the education they preferred to their own rising generation, but on their own account; the public method of training for the young of Islam was gently replaced under the direction of Islam once more. We have also glanced at the widespread foundation and endowment of new colleges, schools, mosques, and similar institutions, by which the disquietude occasioned through a different employment of the resources of the land was obviated. In each of these measures may be found, not indeed exactly a lesson, yet a hint for ourselves; a hint corroborative in its way of Mr. Hunter's proposals regarding Indo-

Mahometan education, and which, in substance at least, may be followed out not less satisfactorily on the banks of the Ganges than on those of the Euphrates and the Halys.

The more dangerous discontent of the old and dis-occupied families of the land, has been in many instances appeased by a judicious allotment of civil, and more often of military employment. A noble, but disaffected Koorde, on his way to Constantinople with a burden of many, nor unfounded grievances, applied to a friendly Turkish provincial Governor of Anatolia for an introduction to the all-powerful 'Aali Pasha, Prime Minister of the Empire. 'For sale; buy,' were the words, written in Arabic, and unintelligible to the bearer, inscribed on the paper which was given him at his request. A couple of months later the Koordish Bey and his two eldest sons, fine dark-eyed youths, the very images of their father and fearing no created being but him, were holding honourable and advantageous commissions in the Turkish army. That this method has not been more often pursued, and the old score better wiped out, is the fault of the black-coated clique, the Stambool bureaucracy; a fault they may one day have cause to rue. However, to the most urgent cases, conciliatory remedies, of which the above is a tolerable specimen, have, in fact, been applied; and here again a useful hint, with appropriate modifications, of course, and due regard to times, places, and circumstances, may be taken.

But the difficulty of all difficulties was that created by the application of non-Islamitic law to Islamitic subjects. Law and religion are, most unfortunately on the whole, not less bound up together in the Mahometan than in the Judaic system; and to tamper with the one is to trench dangerously on the other. Yet the

ever-increasing influx of foreign settlement, enterprise and policy, with the pressure exerted by foreign ideas and ways, seemed to necessitate some modification in this matter; new tribunals were absolutely required, and the frequent presence of Europeans, or the implication of their interests, direct and indirect, exacted the introduction in one form or other of European law. To use a somewhat technical phrase, the establishment of non-denominational tribunals seemed no less inevitable than that of non-denominational schools; and it was precisely the having recourse to such that the Muslims could not stomach. In Islam, and Islam alone, they lived and moved and had their being; and Islam, and no other, should or could be, they held, their arbiter and judge. Nothing, in fact, had so intensely irritated Mahometan feeling throughout the length and breadth of the land as the new-fangled courts of justice; hateful under any circumstances, they were intolerable to the sensitiveness of the 'Revival.' Yet the maintenance of these courts was, in the actual state of the East, an undoubted necessity. How then should the Ottoman Government, which, though secretly leaning to the 'Revival' as to its best ally, yet above all things desired to conciliate each party and offend none, solve the problem?

The problem, like many others, was solved by an evasion; but the evasion was a skilful one. The new courts were left, in seeming at least, untouched; but, the commercial and the mixed tribunals excepted, were conducted, if not on the basis of, at least in fair accordance with, the Sunneh code. Meanwhile all intra-Mahometan causes, all questions of inheritance, contract, purchase and the like between Muslims, all acts of marriage or divorce, all incidents of social or family life requiring legal intervention, were removed from the

recently-founded tribunals, and referred exclusively to the 'Mahkemah,' the normal court of Islam, presided over by the Kadee, with the Muftee for assessor, and the 'Ulemah for counsel. Thus Mahometan life was withdrawn from the dangers and inconveniences of non-Mahometan law, and found itself securer than ever within its own limits; renouncing for good the vain attempt to influence or mould others to itself, it was guaranteed, in return, against being moulded or influenced by them.

Can we derive hence any lesson or hint for our own guidance with regard to our Indo-Mahometan subjects? A preliminary objection must be explained, before this question can be answered.

There are lands where certain phases of thought and conduct seem ever to reproduce themselves invariably and infallibly whatever be the new race and creed that cover the surface of the ground, just as in certain soils the same weeds persistently re-appear, whatever crop be sown there by the husbandman. Thus it is, for example, with Egypt; thus too, and remarkably so, with India. There the sacerdotal superstition so proper to the Hindoo, has re-risen and infected with its taint the super-induced settler, the severe monotheist Muslim; so that we now see the Indo-Mahometan regarding marriage, not to mention other incidents of life, no longer as a merely civil and social, but as a religious contract, and investing the kadee—or kazee in his pronunciation—with a semi-priestly function and character, wholly alien from that personage in the genuine conception of Islam. If additional evidence were wanted of this Hindoo leaven, and how far it has leavened the whole lump, it may be found in the fact that, within the limits of Hindoostan, the judicial office, else-

where strictly personal, and in degree capable of hereditary transmission or successional right, is here often looked on as a matter of birth, and is handed down from father to son. A doubt has consequently arisen in the minds of our own legislators—a doubt justified by local conditions—whether in taking on ourselves in India the nomination and the support of the Mahometan 'kazees,' we may not be assuming, or at any rate be plausibly accused of assuming, the position of active promoters of Mahometanism itself?

But it is not so. The semi-religious or sacerdotal character of the Indo-Mahometan kadee and his functions is purely subjective, not objective; that is, it may erroneously find place in some Hindoo minds and appreciations, but has no real or legitimate foundation in fact and in Islam. The kadee of Mahometan orthodoxy is a civil officer, holding a civil appointment and performing civil duties, no others, for civil, social, or private life; and should the natural and very pardonable ignorance of a British assembly on such matters arouse a 'Mrs. Grundy' outcry of 'religion in danger' against our Indian Government, for doing what as the rulers of a Mahometan population they cannot refuse in justice and equity to do, the answer is ready and plain.

This preliminary objection removed, it may unhesitatingly be affirmed that in what concerns the legal, or, better said, the judicial dilemma, we may, in respect of our Indo-Mahometan subjects, wisely take a leaf from the book of our Ottoman friends. Where plaintiff and defendant, where the parties contracting in marriage or otherwise, or rescinding contract, where testator and legatee are alike Muslims, let matters be between them in a court cognizant of Muslim civil law, and regulated, as near as may be, after Muslim fashion;

and let the legal officers of such courts, from the highest to the lowest, be invested with all the sanction that our own Indian Government—the only one on Muslim no less than on non-Muslim principles competent to do so within Indian limits—can give. A kazee-el-kuza't in each Presidency, with a Sheykh-Islam at Calcutta, nominated by Government, salaried by Government, dependent on Government, and removable by Government—all conditions, be it observed, of the Sheykh-Islam and of every kadee in the Ottoman Empire itself—endowed with the appropriate patronage for subordinate appointments, but requiring for the validity of each and every nomination our own confirmatory sign and seal; good Mahometàn law colleges and schools, conducted under our supervision, and maintained on our responsibility; these are what would give us a hold over the most important, because the most dangerous, element in our Indian Empire, such as nothing else could give: a hold that the disaffection, did it ever occur, of others from within, or the assaults of rival powers, not least of 'infidel ones' from north or elsewhere without, would only strengthen.

Let us 'be wise and understand this,' and not incur the reproach of those, rulers too in their day, who 'could not discern the signs of the times.' We can no more check or retard the Mahometan 'Revival' in India than we can hinder the tide from swelling in the English Channel—I am writing on its fair shore—when it has risen in the Atlantic. The 'Revival' is a world-movement, an epochal phenomenon; it derives from the larger order of causes, before which the lesser laws of race and locality are swept away or absorbed into unity. But we can turn it to our own advantage; we can make the jaws of this young-old lion bring forth for us honey and the honey-comb. And this we can do with-

out in the least compromising our own Christian character as a Government or as a nation. The measures required at our hands in our Indian heritage are simply mercy, justice, and judgment; and these belong to no special race or creed; they are the property of all, Christian and Muslim alike—of West as of East, of England as of Mecca.

V.

THE TURKOMANS AND OTHER TRIBES OF THE NORTH-EAST TURKISH FRONTIER.[1]

(PUBLISHED IN THE 'CORNHILL,' NOVEMBER, 1868.)

NOTICE.

This Essay is in its form topographical; it contains some observations made by myself while on a tour of duty, more than four years ago, through the extreme North-East provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Since that time I have revisited these same districts, and found the march of events to be much as I had at first anticipated.

Should, however, the proposed 'Euphrates Valley' route, or rather, that of the Tigris, be carried out, considerable modifications may be expected in the Turkoman-Koorde development here indicated. And as, if we do not take the Route into our hands, the Russians will into theirs, such modifications may, under one form or another, be confidently expected. But it is little likely that Islam will be a loser in any case, though the Ottoman Empire, and the Anglo-Indian, too, perhaps may.

INTERESTING as it is to watch the progress and development of nations, still more interesting is it to witness their first origin and beginnings; not only from the very rareness of opportunity for observing such phenomena, but also from the peculiar and instructive character of the circumstances which occasion and accompany them. Now, during many years passed in

[1] This paper was, in substance, given by the writer at the meeting of the British Association in Norwich, August, 1868.

the East, the question has again and again occurred to my mind, whether the productive powers of those regions which have given birth to so many nationalities, so many dynasties, so many empires,—those regions whence not only the outlying districts of Asia itself, but even Europe and Africa, have been so often flooded, were indeed wholly exhausted; or whether any 'new blood' might yet be expected thence for transfusion into the veins of this young-old world of ours, any new outpourings into the stream of time? For a long while I could not find any satisfactory answer to this query. Only thus much, that a protracted residence among Arabs, Syrians, Persians and Indians, central or southern, had convinced me that no such 'Revival' could be expected from amongst them; that in those basins of human life, the water, once so overflowing, had ebbed back for good into its normal limits, and that although Arabs, Persians, Syrians, Armenians, Mahrattas, Tamils and the like, might long continue to exist as such, each race moving on its gradually progressive or retrogressive line, yet that no new springs of nation or empire could —within the reach, that is, of any probable calculation— be expected to be broken up and opened in or from that part of the great deep of mankind. But latterly, during two years of residence, partly in Eastern Turkey and partly in the adjoining Caucasus, I have found myself the bystander of a well-head of nationality, in a region where the process of production and formation is rapidly going on, where the elements assume fresh combinations, ferment, and in fermenting increase; promising at no distant day to crystallize into a new nationality, with a type and destiny of its own, differing from any that have as yet gone before it.

The scene of these vital energies, the region on which we may now, not unprofitably, fix a half-hour's attention,

is the great Asiatic highland placed south-east of the Black Sea and south-west of the Caspian. The limits of this region are assigned: westward by the torrent-river Kizil-Irmak, the Halys of the ancients; southwards by the Tigro-Euphrates valley, and what adjoins it; eastwards by the deserts and tracks of Central Persia, and northward by the Black Sea, Russian Georgia, and the Caspian. The highland itself is formed by a huge mountain-chain, or rather by several intertangled chains, to which the collective name of Anti-Caucasus might be not inaptly given, as the whole system runs parallel to, and in formation and general character much resembles, the well-known Caucasus, from which it is separated by the wide valley of Georgia and the plains watered by the Rion or Phasis, and the Araxes. Thus the direction of this Anti-Caucasus, this Asiatic Switzerland, lies from north-west to south-east; that is, from the Anatolian coast behind Trebizond to the lofty peak of Demavend and the neighbourhood of Tebreez or Tauris. It comprises the whole East of Anatolia, with northern Kurdistan, both parts of the Ottoman dominion, besides the Russian provinces of Erivan and Kara-bagh, with the Persian province of Azerbeyjan; its central point is an old, almost a pre-historic, starting-point in the history of our kind, the double cone of Ararat, and its never-melting snows.

No part of the world is, it would seem, better fitted to become what men call the cradle of a nation. The soil, everywhere fertile, is, up to a height of 6000 feet and more above sea-level, rich to superabundance in all kinds of cereals,—corn, rye, barley, oats, and the like; higher up are summer pasture lands, or 'yailas,' to give them their local name, of vast extent, clothed with excellent grass; in the valleys below ripen all the products of our own South-European climate,—vines,

fruit-trees, maize, rice, tobacco, and varied cultivation, alternating with forests unexceptionally the noblest that it has ever been my chance to see: ash, walnut, box-wood, elm, beech, oak, fir, and pine. If to its above-ground riches we add the metallic products of the land, principally iron and copper, with not unfrequent silver and lead, and also, I am informed, but must speak with hesitation on a subject where so much technical knowledge is required, coal; add also a pure and healthy climate, averaging in temperature that of Southern Germany; add perennial snows on the heights and abundant rains in the valleys, whence flow down those great rivers, Chorook, Araxes, Tigris, and Euphrates, with all their countless tributaries, and other water-courses of less historic note, but of scarce less fertilizing importance, some to seek the Black Sea and the Caspian, some the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf;—all this, and we may reasonably conclude that few portions of the earth's surface are, natural resources considered, better adapted for the habitation, increase, and improvement of man.

The population, made up in the main from Armenians, Turkomans, and Koordes, was however, till lately, not dense, scarcely perhaps fifteen to the square mile, and was, besides, somewhat on the decline. Want of roads, and insufficient or mismanaged government, may be assigned as the principal cause of so unsatisfactory a condition. But now all is rapidly changing. Russian pressure on the north-east is fast driving the Turkoman tribes, once settled in farther lands, into the space just described; the same pressure, of which we in Europe can scarcely form an adequate idea, has lately added a numerous, energetic, and increasing population in the myriads of Circassians and their kin, expelled from their native mountains to find here, across the Turkish

frontier, the toleration and existence which Russia persistently denies to her own non-Russian subjects. Persian anarchy, for it is no better, supplies also its yearly quota of emigrants, chiefly Turkoman; while the somewhat lax hospitality of Turkey receives all these new forms of life within the bounds of the empire, and allows them to combine and develope much as they choose. And they are, in fact, now fast coalescing and organizing themselves into a new nation.

It would be impossible within the limits assigned by a notice like the present, to go over and investigate the entire extent of territory above traced out, or to follow in detail the ethnological activities going on at each point of its surface. I will accordingly restrict myself for the present to the portion which I have most lately and more thoroughly studied: that, namely, which lies immediately along the north-east Turkish frontier, and which comprises whatever lies between the latitude of Batoum, Kars, and the town of Moosh to the west, and the Russian boundary, from the Black Sea to Mount Ararat, eastwards. From this strip we may estimate much of what passes in the adjoining districts. During August last duty required my presence at Kars, a place well known to history as the stronghold of Eastern Turkey, known also from its gallant though unavailing defence, under British and Hungarian auspices, against the overwhelming forces of Russia, headed by Mouravieff. During my stay there I had the opportunity of forming acquaintance with some of the native Begs, or hereditary nobles, and between us we concerted a visit to the nearer-lying Eastern provinces, namely, those of Kagizmand, Shooragel, Ardahan, and Ajarah, provinces situated, as I have before implied, between the latitude of Kars and the Russian frontier, reaching from Ararat to the Black Sea.

South-east of the rocks of Kars, of its ruined citadel and dismantled batteries, stretches a wide and undulating highland, partly corn-field, partly pasture-land, breaking up into abrupt ravines and craggy heights as it approaches the deep bed of the Arpa-Chai, or 'Barley-river,' now the limit of the Turkish empire in this direction. Over this highland we set out on our way, mounted on the hardy horses of the country; and it was a pretty sight as we descended from the heights of Kars into the grassy level. All the garrison of the fort, about a thousand in number, had been drawn up outside the gates under arms, to salute us as we went by: so willed the Pasha of Kars, who, in answer to my remonstrances at such an excess of compliment, replied, 'It is only right that all the people should see how Turks honour and respect a representative of the English Government.' But besides the Ottoman Pasha, his officials and soldiers, with whom, however important characters in their way, we have nothing special now to do, there rode alongside and around a crowd of horsemen, blending, in one gay and dashing multitude of two hundred or more, every specimen of the various elements now combining, if the world's destinies permit, into one national whole. Omitting names, I may mention among the attending crowd, an old Beg, grave, silver-bearded, and with features partaking alike of the harsh Turkoman lines and of the more regular Georgian mould. Descended from the great Atabegs who have held this land in fief from the earliest Sultans, he was himself father of the chief now ruling over the very province of Shooragel on which we were now to enter. At a short distance further on the young Beg himself, gaily dressed, and with a large retinue of horsemen, met us: his Koordish descent on the mother's side had given him a wild, almost a brigand look, which, blending with the

austere harshness of his father's expression, made him seem no less worthy than he really was to be ruler over this populous but somewhat turbulent district, where a tight hand and a sharp sword are often needed. In our band rode also his kinsman, the chief of the greatest of all the Koordish tribes, and decorated with the title of Pasha; he could command the obedience of at least twenty thousand families, all bearing his own name of Silowan; his residence was at Alajah Dagh, or 'the Variegated Mountain,' not far from Ararat; and there he lived in a style much resembling that of a Fergus MacIvor and his likes in our own Highland North. His dark complexion, long black hair, splendid figure and powerful build, were well set off by his dress, all scarlet and gold; he was covered with arms and embroidery; a thorough Koorde; a dangerous enemy, as he has often proved himself, and a doubtful friend. But he is now allied by marriage with the great Georgio-Turkoman family; and while, mindful of his rank, he rode slow and stately by my side, three handsome youths, his sons, gaily dizened in scarlet, gold and steel, like their father, careered the plain, unmistakable Turkomans, in all that their mother could make them so.

Such was a sample of the chiefs: their followers, as is usually the case among the lower orders, were still more characteristic in their dress and appearance. Some, the greater number indeed, were genuine Turkomans, short, thick-set, heavy-featured men, with small eyes, brown or black and dusky complexions; their dress made of dark cloth, trousers and jackets; and on their heads the national black-wool coverings, slightly conical in shape, which have earned the wearers the nickname of Kara-Papacks, or 'Black Caps,' by which they are commonly known on these frontiers. Armed with spear and pistol, rarely with sword or carbine, and mounted on

small, strong-built, fiery horses, the riders had never enough of galloping after each other, lance-throwing and pistol-firing in mock fight; utterly regardless of broken ground and rock, a severe tumble of horse and man was a matter of constant occurrence, and of much rough merriment. These Turkomans are fearless and lovers of fight, but they possess also the more sterling qualities of a dogged perseverance, and a power of working to an end hardly inferior to that claimed by our own Anglo-Saxon race. Their fathers, under the Seljook dynasties, Kara-Koiounlis and Ak-Koiounlis, men of the Black Shepherd clan and the White, long ruled over Western Asia; and the sons have a very distinct intention of doing no less, should their turn come. Whether they ever will or not, we shall try to guess further on. Others, again, were Koordes, handsomer and more Semitic—to use a worn-out nor very accurate phrase—than their Turkoman companions, in face and appearance, gayer in dress, lovers of scarlet and bright silk girdles, more addicted, too, to the use of the gun and carbine than the Turkomans. More active and fiery also, but less steady and dependable in work. In the union, daily cementing, of these northern Koordes with the Turkoman basis, lies a great hope of power; each element seeming to supply that which is wanting in the other. Others again, and these were the most remarkable in appearance, were newly arrived Circassians, still wearing their long mountaineer dress of grey or yellow cloth; the breast covered with in-worked cartouche pouches; knives are in their girdles, long bright guns are slung at their backs, and on their heads high cylindrical caps, of the kind that some Cossacks also wear, of whitish wool the most. These Circassians are generally taller and better proportioned in stature than either Turkomans or Koordes, they are

more regular, too, and handsomer in feature by far: their hair is generally brown, occasionally auburn; their eyes blue, grey, or hazel. All wear the silver-mounted dagger of the Caucasus, a terrible weapon in close fight, straight, broad, double-edged, and pointed. Their character is much what might be expected of men who, with their fathers before them, have been lifelong engaged in guerilla war for liberty, religion, and even existence; such wars turn nobles into intriguers, and peasants into brigands: it cannot be otherwise. At first, too, they showed but little disposition to unite, or even to agree with the elder races of their exile home. But now they, like the rest, are fast amalgamating, by marriage and other social processes, with their Turkoman neighbours; and with this union they acquire more orderly habits and steadier ways. In the Georgian population too, freely sprinkled hereabouts from the earliest times, especially where we go northwards to the Black Sea, the Circassians find something of their own blood and kinsmanship, not severed from them here, as is the case in Russian Georgia, by difference of creed. For all these various races are Mahometan; and, thanks to the violence of Russian bigotry and its encroaching fanaticism, much more earnest Mahometans than they used to be in past years.

To complete our cavalcade we must add to the picture the provincial judge of Shooragel, in his green turban and wide blue robes, an elderly grizzled personage, but a native of the land, and though a man of the gown, not less good in the saddle than any of his Turkoman kinsmen. Also a Mollah, or Queen's counsel (Sultan's counsel, we should say), white-turbaned, freshly arrived from his studies at Constantinople, now for the first time mounted on a young Turkoman horse, decidedly too much for the rider. There are others,

begs and chiefs, allied in kindred, and of various rank; of these, cross-descent has often made it impossible to say whether Turkoman, Koordish, Circassian, or Georgian predominates in their blood and brain. There are also a few negroes, lively and dashing, gaudily dressed, and noisy as elsewhere; great favourites among all.

Such was our cavalcade, though varying from time to time as to the precise individuals who composed it, some dropping off and others replacing them, for a good month. Every day in the saddle, morning and afternoon, we traced from village to village, by valley and mountain, a serpentine line, from Kars down to Kagizmand, at the north-western foot of Ararat, close under the 'Variegated Mountain' already mentioned. Throughout this district, called of Kagizmand, the Koordish element is numerically superior. Then up by the strange ruins of Ani, once capital of Armenia, and described by Sir W. Hamilton, now utterly desolate, through the great districts of Lower and Upper Shooragel; here the Turkoman population much outnumbers all others. So is it also in the yet higher-lying province of Ardahan, north, which we next visited; while in the two Ajarahs, higher and lower, which we last traversed, till, through the noble forests and wild ravines of the mountain-chain, we reached the shores of the Black Sea near Batoum, Georgian and Circassian blood prevails over all other. But in what regards administration, feeling, and tendency, all these provinces are in fact one, governed by the same rulers, and bound together by community of interest, religion, and even topography.

The entire length of our line of journey was 450 miles; the district itself comprises about 20,000 square miles; the fixed population, to the best of my reckoning

numbers about 700,000 souls, thus averaging thirty-five to the square mile. The nomade or pastoral population, if added to the above, would raise it to sixty at least.

It would be pleasant to myself, for remembrance is pleasant, nor, I think, uninteresting to my readers, were I to describe in detail the memorials of past time which stud that historical region, the grandeur of its scenery, the fertility of its produce, the rushing clearness of its many waters. Here are ruins more ancient and not less vast or architecturally graceful than those of Ani; some are of Armenian, some of yet earlier date, others of Georgian or Seljook construction. Nature, too, has her wonders. The wild black rocks of Kagizmand clustering up toward Ararat; the great clear lake of Childer, fifteen miles in length by four or five in breadth, pure as the Swiss Vier-Wald Städter or Walen See, and in winter one firm sheet of waggon-traversed ice; the pine-forests, the precipices, the waterfalls, the rich mountain vegetation, bright flowers, dark caves, and iron-laden springs of Ajarah, much surpassing each and all the boasts of the most tourist-sought nooks of Switzerland or Tyrol, which now seem to me but tame; these also would deserve a notice, or at least an attempt. But we must pass them over for the present, and occupy ourselves rather with what is, after all, of higher import, namely, the living inhabitants of the land and their condition.

And, first, I could not but remark with some surprise —for I had come hither imbued with the generally prevailing notion that the Ottoman territory in its interior would present little but waste lands and a diminishing population—that every height we crossed, every valley we entered, opened out to us one or more villages, many of quite recent construction, each con-

taining from thirty to two hundred or more houses, and ringed by an inner belt of gardens and an outer one of widely cultivated corn-lands. The flat-roofed houses, their whitened walls, the barns and fences, sometimes an oblong mosque with a little attempt at dome or minaret, shone gaily in the sun; often contrasting in their cheerful life with the black heavy stone walls of some old Armenian church situated among them, and now long since abandoned to the ruin of disuse and neglect.

'Do you see those villages?' said Yousef Beg, the Turkoman governor of a 'kaza,' or sub-district, in the province of Shooragel, as he accompanied me through his territory. 'Thirty years ago there were only fifteen villages here; now there are eighty-three.' I asked whence this increase, and how. 'It is all my father's doing,' said he; 'and these new-comers are all from Russia.' He then proceeded to explain to me the system adopted by himself, and by others also, for colonizing the land. 'The Turkomans,' said he, 'of Erivan and Kara-Bagh,'—you will find these districts in that part of the Anti-Caucasus chain which lies immediately south of Russian Georgia, and contains the great towns of Erivan and Elizabethpol, with the lovely Erivan lake: they reach from the Turkish frontiers to the Caspian,—'these Turkomans and the other Mahometan tribes there dwelling are constantly on the look-out for an opportunity to escape from the territory now that it has been incorporated into Russia. We on our side keep up a constant correspondence with them through the means of our agents, and make them free offer of lands, livelihood, and liberty among ourselves. Sooner or later they come, though they have sometimes difficulty in so doing, as the Cossack guards on the frontier have charge to hinder their passage; when possible,

they bring their cattle and goods with them; sometimes they cannot get them across. But whatever be their condition, each family on arrival receives a plot of ground; they find also help to build their houses, and a three-years' exemption from any tax or duty soever. They soon settle down comfortably; till the soil; and in this way the district, from poor and desert, has become rich and populous.' To this explanation, given by the Beg, I will add that these immigrations are of constant occurrence; they are, indeed, in some years more numerous than in others; but the tide is always flowing in, and at its present rate may fairly be reckoned at 1,000 families, or about 6,000 individuals of the Turkomans alone, per annum. By what exact means or ways all this is effected, need not here be said. Suffice that I have reason to believe, or rather to know, that during the coming years the movement will not only not slacken, but will assume an extent and a rapidity far exceeding anything that has gone before.

History, and, in the further East, the testimony of our own days, show us the Turkomans shepherds and neatherds in the main; rarely as fixed cultivators or villagers. But from the pastoral life—unlike that of the hunter or savage—to the agricultural is but a step; and wherever an opportunity occurs, this step is readily made; once made, it always tends to become irrevocable. The Turkomans are everywhere making it, and with it find their consequent bettering in all ways. Their skill in agriculture, the wide and harvest-covered fields that surround their settlements, the comparative comfort of their dwellings, and the constructive ingenuity of the huge stables in which their sheep and cattle find refuge and provender during the long winter months, all prove that their nomade condition in Central Asia is more the result of circumstance than of an innate and irrepressible

bent; that under the forms of tribe they have the materials of a nation; and that the city, with all its consequences of wealth, culture, and peaceful civilization, is at least as natural to them as the tent and the mountain side. Sometimes gathered in groups, but now more frequently intermixed among the flat Turkoman dwellings, are the gabled roofs of Circassian cottages. When I say Circassian, I mean to include under that general term several tribes, united often rather by community in their mode of life, their aims and habits, than in their origin; at least so it would appear from their great physical and lingual diversities. Among these the readiest to renounce any acquired ways of violence and plunder are the Abkhasians of West Caucasus; we should also remark that amongst them the anti-Russian guerilla war was comparatively of very short duration. Their general conduct soon becomes excellent and orderly, whether they settle down into peasants or townsmen. The most unruly, on the contrary, are the Chechen, a numerous clan, of East Caucasian origin; yet they, too, amend in time. All have begun to show a tendency to intermarry with the natives around them, which will probably, in this part of the world, soon merge their nationality in that of the Turkomans. This will indeed be a loss to the linguist and the ethnographer; but it will be a gain to the Asiatic cause in general.

Of all the inhabitants hereabouts the most pertinaciously pastoral, and, in consequence, nomade, are the Koordes. The richer and nobler sort among them do indeed take to fixed dwellings, much resembling in construction those of the Turkomans; but the greater number remain shepherds, and prefer flocks to tillage. Hence I less often found them in the villages, but frequently witnessed or passed among their black tents on

the high 'yailas,' or summer pastures, and on the rapid grassy slopes. Unlike the Turkomans, Circassians, and Georgians, their feelings are more clannish, and even individual, than national; but they are pretty sure to follow the general course of those around them, where war or politics are concerned. In the former pursuit they have always excelled; their courage is proverbial; their chiefs are such in fact, not in name only.

But of all others the Georgians are they who, high or low, best ally with the Turkomans, and that to the greatest mutual advantage. Physically they are higher endowed than any of the other races, and they are so mentally also; their only deficiency is in tenacity of purpose, whence they are easily swayed to one way or another; still the obstinate fanaticism and the dreaded tyranny of Russia has done much to steady the Mahometan Georgians in their new and national cause. Another reason—nor can it be called an undue one—which goes far to facilitate their union with the Turkomans, lies in the treasures of female beauty frequently to be found in a Georgian family; and thus it comes that their alliance in marriage is eagerly sought after. I have also noticed that in the offspring of mixed marriages hereabouts, the Georgian type is apt to predominate. Still, numbers, and what for want of a better and equally concise word we may term 'basal' qualities, will ultimately cause the Georgian element to be merged in the Turkoman, rather than the Turkoman in the Georgian.

Having thus noticed the various components of the population, in what they differ, and in what they combine, I will briefly mention the circumstances which have tended here to prepare the way for, and to facilitate, the rise of a new and determined nationality, with a special bent and future. The uplands now thus tenanted, and, some thirty years ago, comparatively

empty, were before that time the abode of the dispersing and, on its own soil, decreasing Armenian race. Their national capital, indeed, once was Ani, very near the centre of the entire district. But their independence was lost centuries ago, and since that time commercial, and, I must add, usurial tendencies, with little aptitude for pastoral or agricultural pursuits, had been ever tending to remove them from the islands, and to accumulate them on coasts and in cities, often very far distant. At last, as if on purpose to complete the emptiness of these regions, the Russian Government had, in the days of Paschievitch, by every means that its agents could command, enticed away to within its own limits—to Russian Georgia and the fast depopulating Caucasus—the greater portion of the Armenian agricultural remnant. Thousands of Armenian families then left their villages and fields from Erzeroum to the frontier, and emigrated under the equivocal Moses of Russian guidance towards Tiflis, where, however, not finding the expected blessings of a promised land, they diminished, scattered, or perished. But in their rear, a vacant space was thus formed, and it is now teeming with Mahometan life; the Russians have done their appointed task, that of destruction: but they have also unwillingly and unwittingly done the work of Islam; they have converted Armenia into Turkestan. In another manner, too, the Russians have contributed towards the creation of a new and Mahometan nationality. They have not only supplied space, they have infused spirit. Pressure from without, common hatred and well-grounded fear, have gone further to weld these varied materials into one, and to give the new whole a fixed direction, than any skill or enthusiasm from within could ever have done. It is probable that the effect will remain even after the cause has ceased.

A third circumstance, not less influential than the two former, is the weakness of the very Government within whose territory the centre of the new formation is placed. True, the Ottoman Ministry, desirous of assimilating this part of the empire to the rest, appoint from time to time an occasional Stamboolee Pasha or Beg, to govern by the name and in the authority of the Porte. More still, by the fatal Tanzeemat of the Sultans Mahmood and 'Abd-el-Mejeed, regulations known as reforms, but in reality destructions, all local and hereditary chieftancy here, no less than in the rest of Turkey, has been legally and officially abolished, and the old land-tenures, howsoever confirmed by firman or usage, have been taken away. But on these frontiers, and at the furthest end of the empire, 'it is a far cry to Lochaber;' and the native chiefs, Georgian, Koorde, and Turkoman, or rather each a mixture of all three, with a stronger proportion of the last, do really exercise an authority and collect revenues scarcely less than their predecessors did in the good old days of Turkey.

Thus, in addition to the religious bond of Mahometan union, a second powerful bond, namely, that of hereditary authority, exists and strengthens yearly. Nor less efficacious to promote increase and vigour in the new colony and nation is the land-system here observed. Each peasant,—and between peasant and noble there is no intermediary class,—is a proprietor, owning acres more or less broad, for the use of which he must, of course, pay fixed dues, and sometimes arbitrary exactions, but from which neither he nor his family can be ejected by the will of either chief or governor. Land is never forfeited except where life is forfeited also. Thus, governed by their own nobles, and cultivating their own soil, not tenants at will but

proprietors in full right, this population is in a position much more favourable to every national and forward development than is commonly the case throughout the rest of the Ottoman empire. I should add that all males hereabouts from their earliest childhood learn to ride and to handle arms, and both with much skill; so that at a moment's notice all are soldiers.

Nor have the Turkomans, who form a fair three-fourths of this confederation, and from whom the whole takes its colouring and character, forgotten that they are themselves the lineal descendants of the men who, under the great national dynasties of Seljook, Kara-Koiounli, and Ak-Koiounli, ruled over these very lands, and with them over all Western Asia, from the Sea of Aral to the Ægean,—men of great military and no less administrative power; skilled in architecture also: the ruins of their great constructions at Erzeroum, Sivas, Kaisareeyah, and a hundred other spots still remain, witnessing to a grandeur of conception and graceful skill of detail rarely surpassed even in the West. These ruins, colleges the most, bear witness also to learning and study, to a literature, history, philosophy, jurisprudence, poetry, imagination, once flourishing in exuberant variety, nor even now, in the East that is, wholly forgotten. Unable to withstand the Tartar flood poured in wave after wave from the East, and the steady encroaching organization of the Ottomans on the West, these great dynasties broke up and fell; but their ruins have for four centuries formed the main bulk of the population in Eastern Anatolia and North-western Turkey, and they await but the hour and the man to reunite into an edifice stately and sumptuous like that of past time.

Thus not only within the limits above traced, but over vast tracks east and north where Turkoman

villages or tents lie scattered, the materials of a powerful nation await reorganization, and tend rapidly to coalesce round the point where that organization has already begun; invigorated by the infusion of new blood, that of the keen Circassian, the daring Koorde, and the more reflective Georgian. Here, too, is one ruling family, men of practical good sense, tried courage, and long experience in action, men from amongst whom the hoped-for head may well arise. Nor should we wonder, under the reaction which Russian pressure is daily intensifying, to see such a one arise very suddenly. Growths are quick in the East. "

Lastly, a remarkable symptom in this part of the world, and one of deep significance, is the revival of the old Mahometan spirit, and that too under a form which may, in our day, be characterized as armed defensive, but which may soon become distinctly offensive and aggressive. This phenomenon is indeed partly due to Russian encroachment, and to a movement, felt rather than reasoned out, of antagonism to western advance; but it is also, and perhaps equally due, to the consciousness of youth and power. New mosques, new schools, new teachers, all on the severer model of what may be called the nineteenth-century Mahometan revival, the same of which Arab Wahhabeeism is the exaggerated prototype, are multiplying over the face of the land even in excess of actual requirement; and practices contrary to the teaching of Islam, wine and spirit drinking for instance, unfortunately too common some years since, have now fallen into total discredit, and are abandoned to those in whom custom has rendered them, no less than many other vices, scarce a disgrace, Greeks and Armenians. Thus too Ramadan is observed, and prayers performed, with much greater exactitude than formerly. High and low, the nation is in training.

And what will there be in the end thereof? The destiny of this new frontier nation, of this Turkoman rejuvenescence, may be one of three. Either they may be, as many others have been, stamped out altogether, and effaced by the uniformity of Russian supremacy and despotism. This, though hardly probable, is possible: Russia does advance in Asia, and means to advance; that she covets, earnestly covets, the very lands over which we have now been travelling is, in spite of all esoteric and official denials, a certain fact; whether she will be allowed to attempt their incorporation into her vast dead territories, and whether, if allowed, she will have strength to do it, were hard to say. Overrated by some, underrated by others, her resources are, for all accurate conception, practically unknown. But thus much can be said for certain: if she succeeds it will be in an evil hour for Asia; perhaps for other countries also. Or, by a different course of events, the Ottoman Government, already not wholly unaware of the formation process now going on near its frontier, may, by a wise skill, attract to itself the yet fermenting elements, and gain for its empire an almost impregnable barrier, not of fortresses but of men and mountains, against Russian encroachment and the fraudulent rivalry of Persia. Should the rulers of Constantinople, renouncing, for this district at least, the fatal policy and pseudo-centralization of their later Sultans, honestly and in good faith recognize the unalienable authority of the native nobility, legalize their titles, confirm or restore the land-tenures, and, by a properly organized militia commanded by its natural leaders, confer the defence of the soil on those with whom its defence is a present and personal interest, they may in their turn rely on numerous and devoted subjects, on all the advantages of free labour, and, in case of war, on

brave soldiers officered by men knowing their duty, and doing it with a will. Old associations, established prestige, and that religious sympathy which, in the East, is almost a nationality, are all in their favour, and help to assure success. And thus, while the Turkish Empire slowly withers, as wither it eventually must, to the West, and its branches fall off one by one, new growth and vigorous shoots on the East may more than repair its losses. But to put this policy in that entireness of execution which alone can render it availing, vigorous resolution is required; and it is to be feared that, what with the weakness of Ottoman counsels, a weakness of latter growth, but now rendered almost connatural by political timidity; with the habit of concentrating all serious attention on those parts of the empire where talkative and superficial Europeans are for ever infiltrating, suggesting, and meddling with the half counsels of divided and doubting minds; and the multitude of self-offered counsellors, in whom, whatever Solomon may say, there is not safety; the Ottoman rulers will let the great chance go by, and the neglected gain will only then be properly understood and regretted when changed to bitter loss. And thus would follow and become fact the third nor the more unlikely possibility, that is, of a new Turkoman dynasty, with fresh destinies and a future of its own.

But whatever be the event, we of the great English empire cannot be indifferent to it. Anxiety is sometimes felt at the news of Russian conquests in Central Asia, and the security of our Indian possessions is by some thought to be jeoparded by the appearance of the two-headed eagle in Bokhara or Samarcand. But, in truth, the Russian flag over Alexandropol, within a day's ride of Kars, is much nearer India. Let the

line of country, the comparatively narrow line, of which we have been now speaking, from Batoum and the Ajaras on the Black Sea down to Bayazeed and Van, once become Russian territory; and the entire Tigro-Euphrates valley, now separated from Russia and from Russia's obsequious ally, Persia, by Koordistan alone, becomes Russian also. The Persian Gulf and the directest of all Indian routes, a route where no wide desert tracts, no huge mountain-chains intervene, nothing but the serviceable sea, will thus be not only open to, but absolutely in the hands of, our very doubtful friends. The exclusion of all commerce, all communication by this most important line, except what is Russian and through Russia, will be the first and immediate consequence; what may be the ulterior results time alone can tell. But if India have a vulnerable point, next after Egypt, it is the Euphrates valley and its communications. Of all this the key, held at present for Turkey and for England too, lies in possession of these very races, the inhabitants of the Turkoman-Koordish territory. To strengthen the hands of our friends, and to guard lest that key be wrested from them, were but good statesmanship, if timely done.

VI.

EASTERN CHRISTIANS.

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NOTICE.

IN this Essay, written at Trebizond during the Cretan insurrection, five of the principal sects, or, to use a common phrase, churches, into which Eastern Christianity is divided, namely, the orthodox Greek, the Armenian, the Maronite, the United Greek or Melchite, and the Coptic, are successively sketched. The portraits are, in most respects, unpleasing. But should any one view them with distaste, let him console himself with the thought that the shadows might have been considerably deepened, and the deformities of outline rendered even more apparent, without the least violence to truth. Indeed much that the original manuscript contained has been purposely suppressed, lest sobriety of judgment should yield to disgust; while praise has been bestowed in full measure, wherever possible. Races change little in the East, and the Byzantine past, as mirrored in Finlay's masterly volumes, bears a correct ancestral likeness to the Levantine-Christian present.

THE phrase 'Eastern Christians' is one frequent in word and writing, but has very often no better defined a meaning than the much-misapplied names of 'Turks' and 'Arabs.' Still the phrase is a symbol; and many who, were they asked what 'Eastern Christians' really are, might be very much puzzled to define them with anything like accuracy, have yet a tolerably precise idea

of what they themselves mean by the name. Something on Mahometan ground, but antagonistic to Mahometanism and Mahometan traditions, something sympathetic with Europe and the modern West, an element of progress, a germ of civilisation, a beam of day-dawn, a promise of better things.

Is it really so? And first, who and what are these 'Eastern Christians?'

In matter of nationality, it is well to begin by laying down, where possible, certain geographical limits. Accordingly, for the subject now in hand, we will, at our first start, exclude India, Persia, Asiatic Russia, China, and their adjacent kingdoms or sub-kingdoms, and we will take for the field of 'Eastern Christians' that contained within the bounds of the East Turkish Empire, and Egypt; to this last we may not unsuitably add Abyssinia. 'Ask, where's the North? At York 'tis at the Tweed,' said Pope. And where's the East? might have no exacter answer. Be our 'East' on this occasion limited by Persia; with Russia on the north, the Mediterranean on the west, and on the south whatever African lands new Burtons and Spekes may yet discover. Even after this narrowing, our range will be wide enough.

But wide though it be, still wider and stranger in its specific variety is the great 'Eastern Christian' genus included within it. We must, therefore, classify and sub-classify a little for clearness' sake.

The first class may consist of the Eutychian Monophysite, or anti-Chalcedonian school. Of the special dogmas or ritualistic peculiarities implied by these titles our readers may very possibly be ignorant, at least in part; nor would it much advantage them to learn. Laying aside therefore the investigation of microscopic diversities in ceremony or belief—a tedious labour, and

of no general interest—it will suffice for our purpose to note that the above denominations indicate a class of Christians hating Greeks, Greek Church government, and all that pertains thereto, worse than poison; hating also all Westerns, Catholics or Protestants, very sincerely, but with a less violent form of hatred; hating Mahometans also not a little, yet less than the dissident of their Christian brethren.

Now this class comprises four sub-classes, namely, Copts, Armenians, Abyssinians, and Syrians. Of these, the Copts have their principal *habitat* in Egypt, Upper and Lower, though they may be found not unfrequently in Syria also; the Abyssinians are limited to the country which their name implies; the Armenians own for head-quarters the eastern half of Asia Minor, or Anatolia, with the Taurus; they are also to be met with in large communities throughout all the great towns and commercial centres of the regions already indicated; the Syrians are, for the most part, inhabitants of Syria proper, especially north of Damascus. Besides their general hatred of outsiders, Mahometan or non-Mahometan, these four sub-classes have a mutual sub-hatred of each other, varying, however, in intensity and degree.

A second class of 'Eastern Christians' is the Nestorian, or anti-Ephesian sect. Here again we need not prolong the examination of distinctive rites or tenets; it may be enough to say that the more special hatred of these Nestorians is directed against the Greeks; they bear also a fair hatred against Mahometans and Westerns in general. There is no sub-class here; all are alike Nestorians or Chaldeans, though the first appellation is more commonly given to the inhabitants of Koordistan mountains, the latter to their co-religionists who dwell lower down in the Tigro-Euphrates

valley towards Bagdad. A few Nestorians are also scattered about Syria.

A third and a very important class comprise those belonging to the orthodox, or Greek, or Chalcedonian formula. None are better haters than these; in extent their hatred is correlative with the hatred of those already enumerated, but in intensity it surpasses them. This class is divided into two sub-classes, namely, Phanariot Greeks and Russianized Greeks. Of these, the first are to be met with in good numbers everywhere throughout Asiatic Turkey; their head-quarters are, however, in the western part of Anatolia, and the islands of the coast. The second, much less numerous, exist chiefly in Eastern Anatolia; sheltered or attracted by the close proximity of the Russian frontier.

The fourth class consist of 'Eastern Christians' who, while retaining their special ritualistic peculiarities, profess obedience to the See of Rome; they are sometimes called also 'Melchite,' or 'United.' These rejoice in five sub-classes—Greek, Armenian, Syrian, Chaldean, and Coptic, each with the prefix 'united,' and each corresponding in geographical and other circumstances with their non-united namesakes, for whom they reserve their choicest hate, though with a tolerable superabundance of it for each other: also for Mahometans somewhat; less for Westerns.

The fifth class contains the well-known Maronites of Mount Lebanon, colonies of whom may also be found throughout Syria and Lower Egypt. Roman Catholics in creed, and partly so in rite, they sympathise best of all with the Westerns; for all others their hatreds coincide with those above enumerated.

The sixth class comprises native 'Eastern Christians,' who have adopted not only the creed and obedience, but also the peculiar rites of Rome. These abound

most in the Cyprus, and in what once was Palestine; a few may also be seen wherever a Franciscan convent can support a mendicant following. These last are of no importance, either morally, intellectually, or numerically; the mere Pariahs of their race.

We have thus fourteen distinct species of the 'Eastern Christian' genus; each distinct from, and each antagonistic to, the other. This number may suffice us; nor need we extend for the present our researches and our sympathies among certain curious Eastern sects, or nationalities; Christian in their origin, but having since developed into strange forms, hardly compatible with the received type of Christianity, though still widely unlike Mahometanism. Such are the Yezeedis of Mesopotamia, the Anseyreeyeh of Northern Syria, and the Sabæans of extreme Chaldea. Their condition and tendencies merit investigation, but they lie apart from our actual subject.

Nor, indeed, should we have run through this long catalogue of classes and sub-classes, were the lines of demarcation merely dogmatic or ritualistic. In such case it might have been enough to admit to the title of 'Eastern Christians' all natives of the East who accept the Gospel, after one fashion or another, and reject the Koran. But these differences of rite and dogma, seemingly so unimportant, are in reality the surface-lines of deep clefts that centuries cannot obliterate; they are demarcations of descent and nationality, of blood, and spirit. Each so-called sect is in fact a little nation by itself, with its own special bearings and tendencies, social and political, not to be regarded in the same light, placed on the same level, or treated with on the same principles as the nearest sect beside it.

Distinct conditions imply distinct relations; the latter are, or ought to be, determined by the former.

We should do well, accordingly, before we rush into an embrace of general sympathy with our 'Eastern Christian' brethren in a heap, to inspect them closer, class by class; since thus we may learn with whom we have to deal, what we may expect from them, and they from us.

We will begin with those whose name has the widest echo on Western ground, the most talked of, and in some respects the best known of 'Eastern Christians'—the Greeks. No name has created greater interest or embodied brighter hopes. Three causes have contributed to this popularity. First, their claim of descent, or at least of kinsmanship of that ancient nation to which we owe so much in civilisation, literature, and art. Next, their Christianity, supposed to have special points of affinity with our own. And, thirdly, because, rightly or wrongly, they are regarded as containing in themselves, more than any other 'Eastern Christians,' the vitalising element of progress. In England the first consideration has, perhaps, served them best; in France the second; in Europe generally the third.

There is little profit in trying to form an estimate of a people's worth by vague generalisations and from a distance. We will try a nearer, and, so far as possible, an individual acquaintance; and to do this let us go all together and pay a visit to a Greek dwelling-house, be it at Beyrout, Trebizond, Damascus, or Alexandria. It shall be a house belonging to one of the better, that is the richer, class; for Greek society, in Asiatic Turkey at least, acknowledges no distinction based on superior nobility or origin, rank, or talent; the sole discrimination is the drachma. We mean among the laity; for the clergy form a band apart, and their position is chiefly regulated by hierarchical precedence.

We stand before the house, its style, which presents

a certain approximation to the modern French street architecture, the number and symmetrical arrangement of its windows, and a general look of economical neatness, distinguish it at first sight from a Mahometan, or even from an Armenian dwelling. Lucky for us if his eagerness to mimic European fashions has not induced the master of the house to set up a closed outside door, with a delusive bell, at which we pull and pull in vain for a good quarter of an hour; it being much more easy to organise a European bell than European punctuality in attendance on it.

At last we are within the small bare garden—for whatever uses ancient Greeks may have made of flowers, their now-a-days representatives have little floral taste—and are met at the dwelling entrance by a slatternly barefooted maid-of-all-work, who being expected, on inadequate or unpaid wages, to look after everything in the large house, takes her revenge by looking, so much as in her lies, after nothing at all. Spacious in their buildings, costly in their dress, Greeks are miserably parsimonious in what regards servants; their shortsighted selfishness does not comprehend community of interest with others. In this respect they offer a striking contrast to the Turks, with their numerous retinues. A second consequence of Greek economy is the employment of female domestics rather than male, because cheaper. We inquire after the master of the house, Dimitri Agathopylos be it; the barefooted Hebe scuttles off to announce us. Possibly the door of the room where Dimitri is seated opens out on the entrance passage, and we may thus allow ourselves the benefit of hearing the announcement. This Thekla does by informing her master that some σκυλιφρανκοι (lit. 'dogs of Europeans') are in waiting on him. No particular disrespect is meant to us by

the canine denomination, but the Greeks have no other name for Europeans; that is when mentioning them among themselves. English, French, all who took part in the Greek War of Independence, all who furnished the hitherto unpaid, nor ever to be paid loan, are alike σκυλια, ('dogs'). It is only fair, however, to say that Russians are not herein included, possibly because not held, in the East, for Europeans. But the most enthusiastic Philhellenès, even Mr. John Skinner himself, are, to their Greek *protégés*, 'dogs,' along with the rest.

Well, the 'dogs,' who, however, will to their faces be rather more respectfully titled, are admitted into the parlour, sitting-room, or divan. The room and its furnishings have something of an European character, and something of an Eastern, being adroitly managed so as best to miss the comfort of either. Rows of weak-limbed, cushionless chairs, little unmeaning tables, at best only fit for supporting a tray of glasses and Curaçoa, or for card-playing; divans pared down to their narrowest and most inconvenient expression; much cleanliness, however,—for the dust in the out-of-the-way corners is the result, not of wilful unneatness, but of insufficient service;—such is the apartment. On the walls a looking-glass, a portrait (a twopenny-halfpenny one) of King George; another of some defunct Greek patriarch, now elevated to the dignity of saint or martyr; and possibly a third, representing three brigand-heroes who came to violent end in the Greco-Turkish war; these, with a few coloured French prints of fancy female characters, of questionable moral tendency, fill up the spaces on the wall.

Dimitri rises to receive us. Not so the burly, bushy-bearded figure, wrapped up bundle-wise in dark cloth and fur linings, that, half-crouching, half-reclining,

occupies the uppermost corner of the divan. It is an archbishop, one who never fails in his visits of pastoral inquiry to the fat lambs of his flock, and of these the wealthy Dimitri is one. The muffled archiepiscopal head slightly inclines in acknowledgment of our salute. Dimitri himself is a middle-aged man, rather thin, sallow, with brown eyes, brown hair, close-shaven face, and an intelligent and pleasing expression of features. Near him, in brisk conversation, are seated (for why should not our fancy people the room no less than construct it?) two other Greeks, merchants also and natives-born of the place; a third, worse dressed, thin, and hungry-looking, is at a distance; his clothes and appearance announce him for one come from a distance; in fact he is a volunteer-patriot, or brigand, just returned from a visit to Crete.

We take our places next the master of the house, the other Greeks politely exchanging their seats on the divan for the rickety chairs; the Archbishop, of course, remains immoveable. The customary compliments are exchanged; and cigarettes, less expensive than the wasteful Turkish chibouk, or the Persian nargheelah, are passed round, or perhaps omitted. A little later one of the females of the house, wife it may be or daughter, will appear, a smile of unmeaning generality on her face, and in her hands a silver tray with sweetmeats; of which every one takes an infinitesimal portion. Perhaps another lady, a sister-in-law or the like, comes in at the same time, with the same general smile, the same approach to prettiness, and the same want of grace; but as the ladies only talk modern Greek, of which language our party may be supposed ignorant, their stay is not long. Coffee may or may not be served; it is not '*de rigueur*,' as among Turks or Arabs.

Conversation opens; and the first question put by

our host, at the whispered suggestion of the Archbishop, is about Crete. Before we have even had time for an answer, the other Greeks present join in the inquiry. They are all Turkish subjects, grown up and fostered life-long under Turkish rule; men on whom difference of race and of religion has never entailed a serious disability or burden; on the contrary, it has exempted them from many a load borne uncomplainingly by their Mahometan fellow-countrymen. However, they do not avow, they proclaim by the very terms of their inquiry, their entire and active sympathy with the Cretans, that is, with rebels against their own Government; and they go on rapidly (for the agility of the Greek tongue is marvellous) to boldly-expressed hopes for the near arrival of the moment when not only Crete, but the whole Roumelian territory, with Constantinople itself, shall belong to the Greeks. To the accomplishment of which ends they, the Greeks, alone and unaided, are fully equal. So runs the discourse. However, the Europeans in general are much to be blamed for not joining in a general crusade for the destruction of the Turks and the restoration of the Greeks to their capital. Meanwhile, Russian co-operation is spoken of as certain; indeed, the Russian emperor is often entitled, 'our Sovereign,' or 'the Sovereign,' *par excellence;* though, after all, even he is not to have Constantinople for the price of his co-operative labours; that belongs clearly to the Greeks alone.

Very childish all this, and much out of harmony with the reality of things, our readers may say. Possibly so; but childish or inharmonious, such is ordinary Greek talk, the current index of the 'Eastern Christian' Greek mind; and it is this we are now portraying. Let us return to our seat by Dimitri.

Perhaps we venture on an opinion not wholly favour-

able to Cretan success, or express some doubt regarding the exactitude of the latest triumphant telegram expedited from the Piræus; or, worse still, hint that some much-lauded feat of Christian heroism—the self-immolation of some defenders of a convent, for example—has mainly, if not wholly, existed in newspaper paragraphs and photographic illustrations. Hereon even politeness is endangered; and our Greeks declaim loudly against the apathy of Europeans, and more especially of the English, who seem one and all to lie under a strict obligation—never fulfilled as yet—of pouring out blood and treasure *ad libitum* in the cause of the Hellenes. The reasons for so doing are sometimes derived from Homer, sometimes from the Gospel. We insinuate that at any rate we English once of a time did, for our part, something very material in the Philhellenic line, but that the subsequent conduct of the Greeks, whether as to policy or payment, has hardly corresponded to the efforts of England, or of Europe in general, on their behalf. On which we are informed that Greece never incurred any debt at all, either of gratitude or of anything else, for that they were quite capable of doing without us; but meanwhile that a new loan may possibly be better acknowledged.

Nothing but politics, and still politics. Vainly we try to lead the talk to commerce, to literature, to science; all such topics drop like lead. Religion, that is acrid, anti-Latin controversy, and the *chronique scandaleuse* of the place, bid fair for better success; but we, on our side, have no predilection for either, and conversation threatens to languish.

But here the Archbishop comes in to aid. Hitherto he has said little, except when roused by the Cretan discussion to some energetic expression of hatred for Turks and Mahometans; or, by the controversial talk,

to some phrase of not inferior hatred for all non-orthodox and Latins. Now, however, he slides into the special object of his visit. It may be the leasing of a house or shop on Church lands, or perhaps the purchase of some acres for a monastery, or he desires to place out some money at a moderate interest of 18 per cent. Whatever is the tune, the key-note will assuredly be money. Or, perhaps, our host himself (and this is no uncommon circumstance) has in view a fraudulent bankruptcy, to be brought about a few months hence; and accordingly discusses with his Grace, the form of a deed by which one half of his real estate may be made over, for a consideration, to the title of St. Spiridion or St. Charilembos; the other half has, by an equally authentic deed, passed already to his wife's grandmother, or the like; and when the bankruptcy comes, and the hungry creditors go in quest of assets, they may find shells in plenty, but no oyster. The other Greeks join cheerfully in; one dilates on some petty local intrigue connected with the Custom-house, or the Revenue; another on the supposititious claims of some pseudo-Greek subjects. In topics like these the Russian Consulate is tolerably sure to be mixed up. And, in fact, while we are yet talking, in comes the Russian dragoman—a Greek too, of course, sallow, pliable, but with more than the ordinary insolence. His talk is much like that of the others, only more openly and avowedly seditious.

The Archbishop rises, and goes to visit the ladies of the house; he has been preceded to their apartments by the handsome, long-haired young deacon, his companion; but we will not intrude on interviews of, doubtless, a purely spiritual and devotional character.

For our own part we have paid our visit, and are gone. But, our readers may ask, how does the ordinary well-to-do Greek pass the bulk of his day?

Six or seven hours go to business, transacted partly in his own house, and partly in his store-rooms or office, but more by word of mouth than by writing. Five hours more on an average are devoted to the 'Casino,' that paradise of the modern Greek; few of them but visit it for two or more hours at a time, morning and afternoon; here, too, the unmarried Greek passes all his evenings, the married one, some. Here coffee, 'rakee,' the favourite tipple of the modern Hellene, cards, and sometimes billiards, on a decrepit table of the French pattern, serve as supplements to that one great enjoyment of his life—political talk. Here many an intrigue, many a Philhellenic committee, many a lying telegram, many an incendiary pamphlet, have birth; here too the Greek character comes out in its freest and its worst display. Exercise, as exercise or amusement, is little to the taste of the Greek, who, like most, though not all, as we shall see, of his Christian brethren in the East, prefers the use of his tongue to that of any other limb. However, the married Greek, who is generally a kind and even an easy-going husband, and always an affectionate and over-indulgent father, gives much besides of his leisure hours to his family, and there he appears to real advantage. The young and unmarried Greek is seldom, if ever, what we should call well-conducted; he is not immoral, because in truth he has no morals whatsoever; and when the time comes for marriage, he quits a career of profligacy as easily and with as little effort or feeling of shock, as when first he entered on it. He has no remorse for the ill-spent past, and no self-laudation for the well-spent present in these matters; on three points alone is he accessible to anything like real feeling —family ties, politics, and money. In a word, he has no subjective conscience; and often, thanks to his clergy, of whom more hereafter, very little objective.

Well or ill conducted, however, married or single, the Greek has no taste for literature, ancient or modern, beyond that contained in a political newspaper or a pamphlet; these are the limits of his reading; history, poetry, science, art, all lie beyond his range. Of the annals of the very country he lives in—of the religion, customs, studies, and even the laws of his Mahometan neighbours—he is almost wholly or wholly ignorant; some stereotyped tales of Turkish oppression and of apocryphal martyrs are all that he can impart; and even to these a recent date is commonly assigned. Of the political side of Europe he knows a little; of its other aspects next to nothing. The clergy form no exception in these matters.

In religion, those among ourselves who sympathise with the Greek might be somewhat disagreeably startled, were they aware how little he sympathises with them. True, he is deeply superstitious and furiously bigoted against all strange creeds, Mahometan, Latin, Armenian, all much alike, perhaps the Latin most of all; but he has no deep belief, none of the intense confidence of the Mahometan in God's providence. Greek levity and gossiping in Church, and during prayers, contrasts strangely with the respectful propriety of Turks and Arabs in their mosques; the religion of the Greek is a party badge; a thing of no great intrinsic value, but for which the professor is ready to fight at call, simply because it is the badge of his party. Such are the mass; the devouter sort, with their mixture of observance and irreverence, have a painful resemblance to fetish-worshipping atheists. Of the unmarried clergy or monks, from whose ranks the higher ecclesiastical dignitaries are as a rule selected, least said is soonest mended. In no respect can one say any good of them. The non-celibatary, or parish priests, though generally

boorish and ignorant to the last degree, are, on the whole, hard-working and honest men; a better sort of peasants.

In agriculture and whatever belongs to it—in gardening, planting, and the like—no class of men in the East is so backward, and in fact so incapable, as the Greeks. They cultivate little and badly. Hence, with the most excellent soil and climate for their vineyards, they have no wine worth mentioning. But for maritime pursuits, from coast-fishing up to deep-sea navigation, they have a decided turn, though not more than some of the other neighbouring races—the Lazes for example. In carpentry, though not equal to the Turks, who seem to have a special talent for this craft, they are fair artisans; in stonework they are decidedly superior to any, whether in Syria or Anatolia; perhaps, though here the Copts may dispute the palm, in Egypt. Their chiefest skill, however, their speciality (if the term may be allowed) is commerce, in the fullest acceptance of the word. No men have a keener, a more intuitive perception of the laws of exchange, of capital, of productiveness, of fluctuation; none a more hearty relish of their detailed application. Yet here again their inherent love of adventure and intrigue, with a certain restlessness, and, above all, a total want of good faith, frequently interfere with the solidity of their business: hence Greek trade (we are speaking of Asiatic Turkey, as our readers will remember) is seldom of durable success. A Greek is always gaining and losing money, unlike the tenacious Armenian, and the real-property-loving Turk. A further reason of Greek reverses lies in their passion for law-suits, and, we regret to add, their want of honesty in these, as in almost everything else. Besides, although singularly parsimonious, niggardly, indeed, in their table and their hospitality, so much so, that the 'five olives for six guests' of the

Greeks has passed into an Eastern proverb, they are extravagantly fond of everything showy—new houses, gay dresses, expensive furniture, and even, though a Greek is rarely even a tolerable rider, handsome horses; and on these points their expenditure often outgoes the limits of their gains. The same love of show, joined with the superstition which often outlives all that could once have deserved the name of religion, renders them also prone to 'outrun the constable' in church building and ecclesiastical decoration of all kinds;' in this they still show much traditional semi-Byzantine taste and gorgeous skill, and thus justify the assertion that Messrs. Mackonochie, Purchas, and their like would have done much better to borrow their questionable finery, since have it they must, from Eastern than from Western models. Another and a more creditable cause for profuse expenditure on the part of the Greeks is education. On this point they are very liberal, founding and maintaining large schools, well provided with masters and teachers; though it must be added that the courses followed by the scholars would in Europe be considered extremely superficial; they consist almost wholly of the study of modern languages, with a faint tincture of classic and ecclesiastical history, but no other, not even that of the country they live in. Science, art, mathematics, and the like, are totally out of the question.

The profession of almost all the wealthier sort of 'Eastern Christian' town Greeks is the mercantile; a few, however, hold offices under the Turkish Government in the Custom-house and Revenue Departments. These are not unfrequently confounded by superficial observers with the Turks themselves, and their rapacious venality has thus brought discredit on the latter, and, we must add, not wholly undeservedly, since the bad character of the servant is a reflection on the master.

The poorer Greeks, when inhabitants of the interior, are indifferent agriculturists; when on the coast they are more congenially employed in the fishing and coasting trade, often in smuggling. In the towns they become artisans, good or bad. A favourite Greek livelihood also consists in keeping low spirit-shops and disorderly houses. These last the Greek institutes wherever he goes; and as such establishments are on the one hand alien from Mahometan usages, Turkish or Arab, and on the other offer welcome asylums to the dregs of Europe which are continually flowing into Turkey, and above all into Egypt, it is not to be wondered at if Europeans of a certain class are apt to proclaim that the Greeks are the sole representatives of civilisation and good fellowship in the Turkish empire. In this respect they are certainly so, even to the exclusion of other 'Eastern Christians.' Another, and, as the East goes, a scarcely more reputable profession, almost monopolised by the 'Greeks,' is that of the dragoman—a profession which, besides bringing in considerable emoluments, has the further advantage of giving the Greeks, in nine cases out of ten, the first word where European travellers, and but too frequently where European residents, are concerned. And this first word, echoed and re-echoed in books and periodicals, is very often the last word of European opinion on many a matter connected with the past, present, or future of the Ottoman empire.

So much for occupation. But, before concluding, we must give a glance—it shall be no more—at the special feature which draws the sympathy of Western Christians, the Christianity of the Asiatic Greek.

It is a Christianity, the dogma of which is based on the Nicene Creed. This, with a slight and well-known variation, is identical with the formula adopted in the West. Greek dogma extends also to many special

articles taught by the Church of Rome, such as Mass, Transubstantiation, the Intercession of Saints, and Purgatory, though the Purgatory of the Greeks is not in all respects similar to the Latin; Confession, and much else of what is called the 'Administration of the Sacraments,' resembles, on the whole, Roman practice. For image-worship the Greeks have substituted, or perhaps maintained, picture-worship; this last they push to the extremest limits of what, when outside Christianity, is commonly termed idolatry. Thus much for dogma and ceremony. In its moral aspect the Greek religion is a great enfranchisement from all restraint, united with an intense, a more than Byzantine, hatred of Latinism and Latins, summing up all in one great commandment, 'Thou shalt deceive thy fellow, and hate every one else.' A truly 'liberal' Greek is as rarely to be met with in religion as in politics; he is a bigot in both, sometimes a fanatical—always a selfish one.

In matter of race, these 'Greeks' are the mixed descendants of Asiatic tribes converted to Christianity, and amalgamated by ecclesiastical rule in the days of Byzantine supremacy. Syrians, Arabs, Lazes, Galatian, Cappadocian, and others, they have all been for centuries pupils of one school, namely, the Byzantine, and represent its teaching. Their Hellenism is a recent and superficial varnish, a political banneret, and no more. Even now their eyes are not on Greece, not on Athens or Thebes, but on Constantinople.

Their numbers have been variously estimated: a million is sometimes approximately given; perhaps the real cypher may somewhat exceed it. Like all other inhabitants of the Ottoman empire, they have of recent years been on the increase—more so, indeed, than the Mahometan population, decimated as this latter is by the military conscription, from which Christians alone

are exempt; less, however, than the Armenians, of whom we shall soon have to speak.

To the Turkish empire, considered as such, the Greeks, always discontented—always seditious in intention, if not in fact—are a great political evil. Nor can their superficial imitation of whatever is most superficial in European manners and customs, French especially, be held for a real step, or even stepping-stone, towards the civilisation of the East, whatever that phrase may mean. To the military strength of the country, of course, they contribute nothing; to its financial resources as little as they possibly can. Nor is Turkey much indebted to them for the actual extension of commerce, though to this extension they have, partly in fact, more in show, added their quota, and continue to take part in it.

On the whole, it may well be questioned whether this first section of 'Eastern Christians' are entirely worth the sympathy and encouragement bestowed on them by their Western brethren, occasionally at the proximate risk of disorganising or even disintegrating the empire of which they form a part, however anomalous; perhaps Europe itself.

More numerous, and in all the intrinsic means of strength far superior to the 'Greeks,' but less fortunate in outside sympathy, and less favoured in particular by the great creator and propounder of the 'Eastern Question,' Russia, or by Russia's unconscious, purposeless ally, French Foreign Policy, hence also less talked of in Europe—no real disadvantage after all—are the Armenians. Their head-quarters, as we have already indicated, are at Constantinople; also in a manner throughout Anatolia, especially its easterly half; but they are thickly scattered amid the towns of Syria, nor are they rare in Irak and Egypt.

We will suppose our readers acquainted—if they are not already they may easily render themselves so—with the Armenian history of classic and of Byzantine times; with the annals of Ani and of Sis, with the greater and lesser kingdom, and the fortunes of a state, which having like Poland the triple misfortune of three powerful neighbours, has, like Poland, endured, but with far less resistance, a triple partition. But here the analogy ends. The Turks, unlike the Russians, have never set themselves to the task of stamping out the nationalities they have conquered; and while the Poles are being proselytized into Russians by the knout and the mine, the Armenians, under centuries of Turkish rule, remain unchanged, body, mind, religion, usages, and even institutions. Here comes one before us; whether he be from Erzeroum, Kutahaia, or Aleppo matters little. All have the same strong, heavy build; the same thick beetle eyebrows; the full aquiline nose, springing directly, and without the intervention of any appreciable depression, from under the forehead; the same dark lustreless eye; the same mass of clothes on clothes, all dingy and baggy; the same large brown hand, and written in each curved finger tip, in every line of the capacious palm, the same 'It is more blessed to receive than to give.' A race more retentive than the Jews themselves of their nationality; more retentive of their money too, and more acquisitive. 'Shut up all the Jews and all the Armenians of the world together in one Exchange,' old Rothschild is reported to have said, 'and within half an hour the total wealth of the former will have passed into the hands of the latter.' We believe it.

Armenian energy is devoted, with few exceptions, to three occupations—namely, to agriculture, to day-labour, and to usury. The first two are creditable in

their nature; the last less so; but in all three Armenians excel.

And firstly, in agriculture. This has been of all times a staple Armenian pursuit, and is still followed by about two-thirds of the nation. In their hamlet-dwellings, and in the general appurtenances of village life, the Armenians are in most respects less neat, less compact, so to speak, than are the Turkish or Turkoman peasants around them; but their tillage labour is persevering and good; their hamlet arrangements contain the germs of municipalities; the country population thrives, and, unlike the Greek, has no great tendency of gravitation towards large towns or to the coast. Very amusing it is to pass an evening with these rustics. A cottage is cleared out and assigned to the guest, a one-roomed cottage, of course, with a low earth-divan on either side, and a fire-place at the further end; on, or rather let into the walls, are countless wooden cupboards, carved with some pretension to taste; at the lower end of the dwelling, near the entrance, is an undefined space, where agricultural implements, mostly broken, large earthen pots, and other rustic utensils stand or lie; the inner or raised floor is matted, the divans spread with faded shreds of carpet, the wooden roof is black with smoke. All denotes a comfortable untidiness, or an untidy comfortableness, a sufficiency of everything, dirt included; but fastidiousness is out of place in a traveller. So we take our corner seat of a fireside dignity, propped on venerable and slightly decaying cushions, probably of faded red silk; and we may recognise the advantage of Christian over Mahometan lodgings in the absence of the dim burning lamp common to the latter, here advantageously replaced by two huge wooden candlesticks, borrowed from the church hard by for the nonce, and surmounted by large, shapeless, dirty tallow

dips, which require and receive snuffing with the fire-tongs every five minutes. In comes the '*Muktar*,' or 'Elect,' the village headman, a burly, grey-headed, venerable clown, in deportment and heavy dignity recalling the typical English beadledom; follow four or five other elders of the plough, probably a young clerk too, travel-stained, but in succinct Stamboul dress, now on his way from or to the capital; he knows about fifty words of French, and ten of English, which he parades on all occasions. In come the dark blue robes of the parish priest, a respectable peasant like the rest; soon the whole house is full of those whom age or comparative well-being entitle to take rank among the gapers and starers. Then they talk; good heavens! how they talk!—Christian loquacity is not precisely proverbial in the East, but it ought to be so—but the talk is no longer, Greek fashion, all politics; news is indeed discussed, but so are also literature, history, religion, and the like; one feels that one is here among the inheritors of something like an ancient civilisation and a true history. Remark, too, that although special and detail complainings are not unfrequent, there is no settled ill-will against the Turkish Government, and comparatively little religious bigotry against Mahometans; some grudge, national in origin, against Greeks; some priestly rivalry with the Latins; and, thanks to the missionary zeal of late years, some dislike of Protestants also, may possibly show itself. The crops, their success and value, the amount of taxation, the conditions of farming, some change in the local government, some projected irrigation or water-mill, such are the favourite topics of talk. European inventions, the telegraph, for instance, the steam-engine, some new machinery, or the like, come not unfrequently under discussion. There is much theoretical ignorance, but

considerable native shrewdness also in what is said. Still the Armenian peasant has no pretensions to being anything but a peasant; he would gladly better himself, but on the same line of life, unlike the restless and ambitious Greek; with more wisdom, perhaps.

But in large towns—at Constantinople, Smyrna, and the like—Armenian love of labour takes another character, varied by the circumstances of city life. Every traveller, on arriving at the Gates of the Bosporus, must have seen and admired the huge, almost Herculean, hammals or porters of Topkhâneh and Galata, the workmen of the docks and arsenals; these are, nine out of ten, Armenians, heavy, muscular, large-calved, large-boned men, come up from the country to earn a livelihood; earn it they will, and keep it too. A European workman, accustomed to recruit his strength on meat, beer, wine, or spirits, might well be at a loss to comprehend abstinence like theirs, coupled with hard, unremitting labour. Bread and onions, washed down with cold water, cheese and milk for occasional luxuries, such is their bill of fare; their night's lodging is in some broken shed, anywhere, where nothing, or next to nothing, is to pay. In the bitter cold of a Bosporus winter, or the weary, heavy heat of its summer, all work on, steadily, unremittingly; and day by day their earnings are put by, till the slow accumulation of copper 'paras' entitles them to an honourable retirement and comparative ease in their own villages.

In the refinements of mechanical work, where taste is required, in carpentry, and in masonry, Armenians seldom excel; they are, however, tolerable tailors and shoemakers, never hardly sailors or fishermen; unlike the amphibious Greek, the Armenian shuns the water: he is of the earth earthy, more fitted for the inland than the coast. But, whatever be his occupation, he is pretty

certain, by diligence, perseverance, and frugality, to attain a tolerable degree of comfort, occasionally of wealth; and capital once in his hands will not remain idle; it will increase and multiply, too often by the means of which we have next to speak.

Thus far our picture, though not exactly brilliant in colours, has been by no means ill-favoured. But the business of which we have now to speak—a business in the East almost exclusively Armenian, and one, unfortunately, much less creditable than those hitherto enumerated—is that of money-lending, money-traffic, usury, in short.

Every one knows that by Mahometan law not only usury, but even ordinary money-interest, is severely forbidden. The same prohibition extends to insurances, to several kinds of investment, and, by a necessary consequence, to the whole system of 'credit.' But the result, like that of most excessive or sumptuary laws, has precisely contradicted the intentions of the law-giver; and the necessity of borrowing, joined with the impossibility of obtaining a loan on equitable, because recognised and legal terms, has produced an entire system, unlawful and usurious in character. Meanwhile religion, law, custom, hold the wealthier Mahometans back from exercising a profession anathematised by their creed, and discreditable in the eyes of society. And thus it has fallen into the hands of Christians, and particularly of the wealthiest among 'Eastern Christians,' the Armenians, who pursue it much in the same fashion, under the same conditions, and with the same results, as the Jews once did in mediæval Europe.

Illegal interest soon becomes illegal usury, and illegal usury has no limit. The Armenian scale varies from twenty-four to sixty, or even one hundred per cent., sometimes by express contract, sometimes disguised

under a fictitious loan; frequently by compound progression. All classes are victims, but the chief sufferers are naturally the poor, and more especially the peasants. No Turkish, no Arab landlord, would ever dream of selling out or evicting a tenant, but an 'Eastern Christian' usurer will; and when, as is frequently the case, the usurer, through means that we will shortly explain, can gain to his help the strong arm of government, eviction, with all its results of misery, crime, and violence, for Whiteboys are not peculiar to Ireland, is the result over wide tracts of country. Entire villages have thus been unroofed, and cultivated lands left to pasture or to downright desolation. The European traveller, primed with staple ideas about Turkish oppression, the Sultan's horse-hoofs, barbarian rule, and the like, sees the ruin along the wayside, and notes for subsequent publication his observations on the decadence of the Turkish empire, and the fatal results of Ottoman or Mahometan rule — observations which his Greek dragoman will sedulously confirm, and which will perhaps be repeated and believed in Parliament. But could he know the real, the active cause of all this desolation, his visionary Pasha-tyrant would fade away, and transform himself into no other than some wealthy Armenian money-lender, the usurer whose cent. per cent. has taken away the upper garment and the very millstone, not for pledge, but sale. The Turkish Government is indeed not wholly guiltless in the matter, but its guilt is not that of principal, but accomplice; sometimes through omission to punish, sometimes through tacit permission, or even protection, accorded to the Christian usurer; a protection often extorted by the Christianly zealous intervention of some European consulate, to which the Armenian, in his quality of 'Eastern Christian,' has had recourse; perhaps of some

embassy. What, indeed, should the unlucky Pasha, the governor of the ruined province, do in such a case? Does he declare the usurious contract void, does he aid the fleeced against the fleecer, immediately a cry of 'No justice to be had for Christians in a Mahometan court of law' is raised by the Christian prosecutor; and thence may well be re-echoed, through consulate and embassy, to the Porte itself, nervously susceptible, and no wonder, to such reclamations; thence, very likely, in due form, to Europe.

Still more fatal is the result when the money-lender, as is not unfrequently the case, unites in himself the twofold character of usurer that is, and at the same time 'Multezim,' or Farmer of the Public Revenue. Not fear alone, but self-interest, then engages the Government in the prosecution of his destructive claims.

This is the black spot on the Armenian character, else the nation has in itself the materials of much good; but these materials must be looked for chiefly among the poorer classes. Indeed we may remark, in a general way, that in the moral classification of the different stages of society the reverse generally obtains in the East to what holds good in Europe; for in the latter the larger proportion of vice and crime is decidedly among the lower classes, especially in cities; the richer and higher are comparatively free from social evils—a fact of which the main solution lies not exclusively in better education and the like, but also in that riches, throughout the greater part of Europe, subject their possessors to that surest safeguard of morality, public opinion, while the poor range comparatively without its pale. But in the East, from opposite causes, the poor are subject to public opinion, the rich are emancipated from it, and have always been so;

and hence the Scriptural canon regarding the good effects of poverty, and the corresponding anathemas on the wealthy, is a canon by no means of equal literal correctness in Europe as it is, even in the present day, in Asia.

In religion the Armenians, though dogmatically distinct from, and even opposed to, the Greeks, have yet a close resemblance with the latter on most points of practice, discipline, Church government, and so forth. But the Armenian, with deeper religious feeling, has less bigotry than the Greek, nor is his creed so constantly subservient to political ends.

In matter of education the Armenians stand comparatively well. They erect large schools and maintain them liberally; the teaching, too, is to a certain degree solid, and fairly in harmony with the requirements of the East. Much attention is paid to the old Armenian dialect—the Haikán, so called, to national history and literature; Turkish, also, sufficient for elegant reading and writing, is generally taught; French and English occasionally, but in a superficial manner; Arabic or Persian never. However, few Armenian lads, when once out of school, pursue their studies, except, indeed, it be in some monastery, where theology and Church history find life-long votaries.

The Armenians, our readers may have already conjectured, are not a tasteful people; mentally and artistically, no less than physically, they are a heavy race. Their public architecture is heavy; their churches solid, spacious, and ungraceful—a striking contrast to the elegance of Greco-Byzantine construction, ancient or modern. In one respect only have the Armenians a decided advantage, that is, in their dwelling-houses. While the Greek spoils his architecture by an unwise attempt at French or Italian imitation, the wealthy

Armenian builds on and adorns much after the old Turkish fashion—a fashion remarkably well suited to the climate and even to the surrounding scenery. Wide balconies, curiously-carved lattices, deep shadowing eaves, spacious entrances, gay colours in showy patterns; all these he multiplies, and produces a pile unsymmetrical indeed, but picturesque without and comfortable within, thanks to broad divans, good carpets, and plenty of cupboards, painted bright red and green, within which lie folded up for the night's use silk coverlets and embroidered pillows galore. The guest's creature comforts will be further insured by a copious kitchen and a good cook, plenty to eat and drink, and all good: of all Easterns the Armenians alone really understand culinary art; in this, indeed, they cede, yet only just cede, to Frenchmen. Singular that on this one point the heaviest nation of the East and the liveliest of the West should offer so marked a resemblance. Cooking, like charity, covers a multitude of sins, and we have for our part little courage to expose faults hidden beneath such hospitable table-covers as the Armenian. Ill got and well expended, these feasts reverse our own proverb about who sends good meat and who cooks: an Armenian cook is certainly the envoy of the Beneficent Power; the meat has, hardly less certainly, been furnished from a very opposite quarter.

The clergy are, taken on the whole, respectable: to say that they are grasping, can hardly be held a reproach, since this quality they have in common with all their kind of whatever nationality; their morals and their teaching are neither below the average, certainly above those of their Greek brethren. Nor are lay Armenians, taken altogether, so much addicted to looser amusements, gambling and curaçoa drinking, for

example, as are the Greeks. Their hospitality is truly Eastern, that is, liberal in deed and manner; not, indeed, equal to that usual among Mahometans, yet in itself not deficient.

It is curious that among all sects of 'Eastern Christians' the Armenians alone have furnished to Protestantism any considerable number of proselytes. This may be ascribed partly to their greater zeal for education, leading them more readily than others to avail themselves of the numerous American schools and libraries established by missionary zeal throughout the land, partly to a certain innate seriousness of thought and character. Whether, however, the progress, such as it is, of Protestantism among them be a benefit, may be doubted; much might be said on either side.

The total number of Armenians in Asiatic Turkey has been variously estimated: three millions, including, however, those resident at Constantinople, would be perhaps nearest the mark.

In conclusion, we may say that among all 'Eastern Christians' the Armenians (and in a measure, as we shall afterwards see, the Copts) are those on whom European sympathy would, if given, be perhaps least thrown away. It is, however, on these precisely that such sympathy is more rarely lavished. Yet, indeed, by what special title even they deserve it, would be hard to discover. What social merits they have they share with the Mahometan population around them; their vices are their own. Nor are they the while subject to any disadvantages, civil or otherwise, nor to any persecution, nor inconvenience even; in fact, their exemption from military conscription, their national and recognised tribunals, and their foreign appeal through consuls, ambassadors, and newspapers, render them objects of envy, not compassion. And the like may

be said of 'Eastern Christians' in general—it applies to all.

But the Maronites; those heroes of Lebanon; those darlings of France; those pets of Rome; that gem of Eastern Christianity; what shall we say of the Maronites?

If we are to believe the Maronite annals as chronicled by themselves, the Maronites were from ancient times a regal nation, come direct, or nearly so, from the Tower of Babel to Mount Lebanon, with a dynasty and kings of their own, ruling over entire Syria, Jerusalem inclusive, and connected by equal alliance with the greatest monarchies of Christendom. During the Crusades their banners—how could it be otherwise?—floated foremost in the Western ranks; and Maronite valour not so much contributed to, as determined the victory of the Cross. But when fortune turned against the Franks, and Bibars-el-Dāhir completed the work of ruin which Ṣalaḥ-ed-Deen, alias Saladin, had begun, the Maronites, unconquered though alone, still maintained their mountains and their independence against countless infidel enemies, Arab, Turk, Druse, and what not. Who even now hold the keys and balance, not of Lebanon only, but of all Syria; themselves the sole pledge of Christian and European hope in the East; who have colonised Malta; who, having received the Christian faith from the Founder of Christianity himself, transfigured, whatever evangelists may imply or commentators say, not in Galilee, but on the 'exceeding high mountain' of Lebanon, have, with more than Petral or Papal fidelity, kept it intact, inviolate, unaltered, infallible, among schismatics, heretics, and infidels of all sorts, for nigh two thousand years, Abdiels of the Church, sole lily among thorns; who in war, trade, arts, literature, and religion, hold the distinct supremacy

over all nations and tribes of the East, aye, and of the West also; unless, indeed, France be allowed an honorary equality. A Maronite Patriarch is second, but just second, to the Pope alone; each Maronite bishop is a saint; each Maronite chief an Achilles; each Maronite scribe a Chrysostom; each Maronite peasant a prodigy of nature's best. And so on, and so on.

Now let us descend to facts.

During the seventh and eighth centuries of our era frequent bands of oriental Christians, Syro-Chaldæans especially, and mostly Monophysites, or at least Monothelites—that is, in the judgment of Constantinople and Rome alike, heretics—being driven from the uplands of Euphrates and Mesopotamia partly by the irruption of the Arabs, partly by the orthodox persecution of Byzantine governors, successively took refuge in the almost inaccessible, and, till then, almost uninhabited, heights of Lebanon, and there settled. By degrees these colonists organised themselves into a sort of Ecclesiastico-civil Government, with a self-styled Patriarch of Antioch, a Monophysite of course like the rest, at their head, and a certain number of see-less titular bishops for an administrative Cabinet. Nobility or lay chiefs were none; the total Maronite system acknowledged but three classes—clergy, monks, and peasants. Neglected by the Arab or Memlook governors of the Syrian plain, who had little motive for enterprise among barren rocks and unfurnished huts; in open but safe, because distant, hostility with the Byzantine Government, which, orthodox or non-orthodox, was in neither phrase friendly to Syrian dogmas, they remained tributary, but scarcely subject, to the Mahometan rulers of Damascus, Bagdad, or Aleppo.

But when the Crusaders, entering Syria, first opened a prospect of successful aggression on Mahometans and Byzantines alike, the Maronites—a name by which the mixed refugees of North Lebanon were already called after their first mountain Patriarch Maron—adjoined themselves to the Franks, and claimed the kinship of common hatred to Mecca and to Constantinople. The better to cement this new-found alliance, they disavowed or dissembled their Monophysite ideas, and announced themselves Roman Catholics. The ignorance of the Latin clergy in whatever regarded the languages or subtleties of the East, facilitated a union seasonable to both parties; and the Maronites were embraced not as penitents but brothers. Their effective share, however, in the labours and campaigns of the Crusaders, reduced itself to some slight commissariat assistance; so slight that its unimportance eluded the later perquisitions of Mahometan vengeance.

After the expulsion of the Crusaders, their Maronite allies recontracted themselves within their rocky shell; and for two or three centuries we lose sight of them, till they re-appear the obedient vassals of the Druse house of Ma'ān, and of the Mahometan Ameers of Shehāb, their warlike neighbours, the former on the south, the latter on the east.

During the period which we have thus summarily reviewed, the frequent recurrence of politico-religious pressure, analogous though not identical with that which first peopled the northerly districts of Lebanon with Syro-Chaldean Christians, filled the central ranges of the same mountain with Druses, the southerly with the Shee'ya' Metewalees, and the hill-lands from Lebanon to Antioch with the enigmatic Anseyreeyes; while the old Arab family of Shehāb, the almost credible claimants of kinsmanship with Ḳoreysh and the Pro-

phet, asserted, and sometimes exercised, sovereignty over the valley of Teym, the door and master-key of the Druse mountain. Races differing in origin, and every origin a history; but united by the similarity of the circumstances which clustered them together round a common centre of security. Each was an enemy of the powers that were in Syria for the time being, Seljook or Memlook, Arab or Turk; each, the Shehāb alone excepted, was a hereditary enemy to, or an apostate from, the Mahometan creed; each sought, in the fortified refuge of the mountain, to maintain its own usages, laws, and independence. But the Maronites, an unwarlike race, more numerous in monks than in soldiers, and better men with their tongues than with their swords, unequal to isolation, sought a guarantee of their existence in voluntary submission to their next-door neighbours, the high-spirited and closely-organised Druses; and admitted for chiefs the Druse family of Ma'ān, who ruled over their Christian vassals, patriarchs and priests, monks and peasants, with a rule, arbitrary it might be but not unkindly, nor unprofitable to the subjects themselves. Meantime the noble family of Shehāb, whose high blood disdained the supremacy of Circassian or Turk, strengthened gradually and prospered on the East; till, passing from independence to sovereignty, they brought all Lebanon under their power; and, after fierce struggles with which this narrative has no concern, saw the last heir of Ma'ān, and his vicegerent the treacherous Yoosef of Jobeyl, submit to their ascendant, till Druse and Maronite alike saluted them sole lords of the mountain. But their elevation was their ruin. Influenced, partly by the numerical superiority of their Maronite subjects and partly by the delusive prospect of French support, the Shehāb chiefs in a fatal hour deserted the Crescent

for the Cross, announced themselves Christians, and cast in their lot with the Maronites. All folly is contagious, but politico-religious folly most so; and the only Druse family of any importance then actually established within Maronite confines, the Benoo-Lama', did after the Shehāb example; and thus it came that the Maronite peasants discovered themselves for the first time with Ameers, that is nobles, counted among themselves. Sheykhs they had indeed numbered before, but 'Sheykh' among villagers implies simply a village headman, with no title or claim to nobility except in some dubious French patent, or the mere vaunt of self-assumption. Now at last, by the recent Maronitism of the Shehāb and Benoo-Lama', the Maronites became in fact for a few years sole rulers of Lebanon, from Terabolos to Seyda'.

'Set a beggar on horseback, and he will ride—' we all know whither. The first use made by the Maronites of their new-found power was an abuse: it was to harass and oppress their old lords and protectors the Druses. Forgetting that the Shehāb, however powerful while Mahometans, had now by the very fact of their becoming Maronites sunk to the ordinary Maronite level, and could thus no longer uphold those amongst whom they reckoned as equals, they set themselves to cut away the only remaining prop of the independence of the mountain, the Druse chieftains. Meantime 1840 inaugurated a new era for Syria: Lebanon was thrown open to European arms and politics, and foreign interference combined with Maronite insolence in bringing about the guerilla war of 1841, the bipartition of the mountain, and the long series of double-dealing and wrong which at last culminated in the bloody summer of 1860, and the calamities with which our readers are, no doubt, already well acquainted. Since that time,

irremediably weakened from within, and subject to the Porte and its Pashas from without, the Maronites have talked much, intrigued much, and done nothing.

The Maronites of our day may best be divided into three classes; namely, the clergy (monks included), the townsmen, and the peasants. Of the so-called Princes or Ameers, the descendants of Shehāb and Lama', the newly-adopted Maronites, we will say nothing. 'Non ragionar di lor, ma guarda e passa;' the nobility of their origin may be allowed to cast a veil of decent silence over their present degeneracy. As for the Sheykhs, Khāzin, Hobeysh, Kerem, or others, they shall be considered under the class of peasants from whom they derive, and amongst whom they find their proper place.

And first, the clergy: that is, the patriarch, the bishops, the parish-priests, and the monks. All these, partly owing to the circumstances under which Maronite nationality first came into existence, partly to the superstitious character of the Syro-Chaldæans themselves, exercise in Lebanon an authority after which an Innocent III. may have aspired, but never attained. Nor do they either serve God or man for nought. On every pleasant hill of Lebanon, in every fruitful valley, the first object that attracts the traveller's notice is for certain an episcopal residence, a snug convent, or a comfortable priest's house; the fattest olive-groves, the most generous vineyards, the choicest tobacco-fields, the good of the land is theirs; and one-fourth of the Maronite territory is, at the most modest computation, the patrimony of the Church. No roof covers better furnished apartments, no vaults hold goodlier stores, than those of His Holiness the Patriarch; whether he descend to his winter residence at Zook, or refresh his wearied sanctity in the summer coolness of his palace

at Wadee-Kadeesho. Encircled by troops of attendants, some in the appropriate garb of deacons, some in the more dubious array of pipe-bearers or chibookjees, clad, not metaphorically but literally, in the costliest of purple and fine linen; seated at a table, the copiousness of which may in the East be held for luxury; or haughtily admitting the homage of prescriptive superstition, the Maronite Patriarch is at once a parody and a burlesque of an Italian Pontiff, and a model which each of his hierarchical subordinates—bishop, priest, or deacon—strives in due proportion and with tolerable success to reproduce.

The monks, in habits of black serge and ascetic girdles, parade an edifying modesty; but their profession of poverty is belied by the size and construction of their monasteries, by their well-built and better-filled store-rooms, and yet more by the vast extent of their lands. The thin veil of personal disappropriation ill conceals from the eye of the laity, and perhaps from their own, the insatiate greed of the community; and from the prior of the great Convent of Koshey'a, down to the aged hermit of Wadee-Kadeesho, who extends his venerable hand for a blessing and a 'bakhsheesh' to the visitor of his abnegation, the Maronite regular is the most grasping, the most retentive of all his mendicant brethren, West or East.

The first impression of the secular clergy, or parish priests, is at times more favourable. A smattering of studies, Latin, French, and Italian, is a frequent result of connexion with Rome, of visits to Italy and France, also in many cases of education received, or at least of years passed, in the College of the Propaganda. The names of Latin Fathers and of more recent theologians, strange elsewhere in the East, are familiar here; and the garbled history of ecclesiastical authors is re-

chronicled, and believed, under the roofs of Fetooh and Kesrewān. Hence a Maronite priest not rarely obtains the credit of being learned, while in truth only superficial. To the same education they owe their special hatred against Protestantism and Protestants, a hatred bigoted and violent to a scarcely credible degree. In the same they carefully instruct their flocks; and their efforts are effectually seconded by Lazarists, Jesuits, and Capuchins, thickly disseminated all over the mountain; who delight, moreover, to give a practical turn to this anti-heretical fervour by carefully identifying in common use the names of Protestant and of English. The certain and universal salvation of all Maronites; the possible, but hardly probable, salvation of any other Catholics; and the inevitable, unexceptional damnation of all non-Roman sects, schismatic, heretic, Mahometan, Druse, and so forth, but especially of all Protestants; such is the foremost lesson in this Christian and clerical school. And it is from their clergy that the Maronites, more than any other tribe of the earth, take their habitual direction of thought and action.

Such are the distinctive features of the Maronite clergy; in other respects they share the ordinary praise or blame of average Eastern priesthoods.

These are the men who, in '59 and '60, after having by their ceaseless and unscrupulous intrigues brought on the bloody catastrophes of Jezzeen, Ḥāsbeya, Rāsheya, Jaḥleh, Deyr-el-Ḳamar, Damascus—after having provoked a war in which thousands of their people were slaughtered, some on the field of battle, more in cold-blooded massacre, and other thousands utterly and irretrievably ruined—refused the sacrifice of a piastre from their own full coffers, of an acre from their own broad lands, to support a cause, which they proclaimed the cause of God, or to relieve and sustain

the widows and orphans whom they themselves had made. Without a blush the wealthiest clergy of the East saw the misery of their flocks comforted by European, and, in no small measure, by Protestant charity. They snarled at the givers, and greedily swallowed the gift. These are they who then—they had learnt the trade before—paraded their long beards, sanctimonious faces, and flowing robes in Europe; and claimed the alms intended by the easily-gulled charity of the West to feed the orphan, house the homeless, cure the sick and wounded, rebuild villages, schools, and churches; and which in reality found their way so far as the pocket of Bishop this and Prior that, but no further. These are the men who unite all the pretentious bigotry of Catholic Rome with all the vices and meanness of the Christian East; these are they who give to their tribe and nation its special tone, a tone arrogant alike and cringing, base and vainglorious, fanatical to a degree no Greek ever attained, servile to a depth below the servility of a eunuch or a Persian.

Next follows the lay portion of the Maronite nation; we will begin with the inhabitants of the towns.

As townsfolk, Maronites offer in their ways a certain resemblance, not wholly superficial, with the Eastern Greeks. Substitute France for Russia, Catholicism for Orthodoxy, and you will find in any Maronite house of Beyrout, Damascus, or Aleppo, much the same style of intrigue, the same restlessness, the same unabashed disloyalty to their own, that is, the Turkish Government, that characterise the Greeks of the Levant. But in more essential respects the Maronite differs much from the Greek Rey'ah. Colder in blood, duller in brain, clumsy of hand, timid in heart, he is less dangerous, and less interesting. Among all Easterns it is the Maronite who most affects to copy Europeans; but of

all Easterns also his copy is the most blurred by ill-taste, or incomplete by niggardliness. In the same fashion a Maronite will often hanker after trade, and will talk much about it; but here again his cowardice interferes, and he seldom rises above the paltriest commercial peddling. Shop-keeping is generally the limit of the wealthier; the poorer sort follow mostly those pursuits which imply least enterprise, and least manly vigour; they are shoemakers, weavers, tailors, and house-servants. Very rarely does a Maronite find place in a Government bureau; the Christian directors, writers, or accountants in the Syrian Custom-houses or Serey's, are almost invariably Greek or Armenian.

With want of spirit the Maronite unites want of taste; his house, if he be himself an architect, is formless and gloomy; his Church heavy and disfigured by tawdry ornament. When indeed anything that indicates architectural or decorative feeling occurs in a Maronite building, public or private, we may be almost sure that some strange artist has been called in, probably a Greek. The very dress of a Maronite, though the same in the main with those of other Easterns, is generally duller in colour, heavier in fold, and less graceful in cut.

As might be expected from the patronage so long accorded them by France, a patronage to which most of their calamities, and in particular those of 1860, are in great measure due, the Maronites are eager in the study of the French language, which they can often not only speak, but even read and write with considerable fluency. But of French literature they know little, having neither the power nor the desire to appreciate it; indeed, the utmost goal of their European studies is the position of Dragoman, or a place in a European counting-house, or an employment under a French master.

Rarely do they learn Turkish or English; indeed, they have a kind of antipathy to both these languages; nor could it be otherwise considering their fanaticism, and perhaps also the speciality of their European patronage. It is, however, to their credit that, though with less success than some other 'Eastern Christians' their neighbours, they carry their studies of Arab grammar and literature to a considerable length, and are occasionally not contemptible masters in this field.

Be it also told to Maronite credit, that, although the standard of truth among them is certainly not our own, and a European who should model his veracity on theirs in word and deed would strongly risk passing for a cheat and a liar, yet seldom do they push falsehood to those lengths of deception, swindling, and treachery, which have made the Levant infamous from Byzantine times to the present. Perhaps it is slow-wittedness, perhaps a modified honesty; we willingly ascribe it to the latter; the more so that, left to themselves, the Maronites are on the whole a good-tempered race, fairly sociable, imitative, and, though not enterprising, laborious. Drink and gambling also are only occasional vices among them; their morality, in the narrower acceptance of the term, was never severe, nor has European contact tended to straighten it.

From the Maronites of the town we turn to the Maronites of the country; and here, as is usual among races whose virtues and vices are the result of circumstance rather than of will, we find not much indeed to admire, but less also to condemn. Still their visitor will be startled by the grossness of their ignorance; for although schools are plenty among the Maronite villages, the bigotry of the masters, mostly priests, has in general narrowed down the teaching to some childish Catechism, badly translated from the Italian

or French. Another characteristic of the Maronite peasant is dirt; and, with every natural advantage of situation and climate, the commonest expedients of municipal cleanliness are so strangely neglected, or unknown, that even the pure air of the Syrian mountain-tops seems hardly a security against endemic pestilence.

In the culture of the mulberry-tree and the rearing of silk, in tobacco-growing and in the care of vine-yards, Maronite husbandmen are commendable for diligence and skill. Their industry, like that of the up-country Armenians, is of the heavy, persevering kind. Like the Armenians, also, they have little turn for sea-pursuits; and while the entire line of Maronite coast, from St. George's Bay to the river of Terabolos, is indented with countless creeks and shallow inlets, well adapted to the small craft and fishing-boats of Syria, the number of sailors or fishermen supplied from among the Maronites is inconsiderable.

The village chiefs or Sheykhs, Khāzin, Ḥobeysh, and others, are distinguished from the peasants around them by their habits of childish intrigue and pretentious idleness, and are confounded with them by a clownish awkwardness, the common badge of the Maronite mountaineer. This clownishness refines itself in the Maronites of Beyrout and Terabolos into mere heaviness and lack of taste. However, their kinsmen of Damascus and Aleppo have, by long separation from the bulk of the tribe and residence among strangers, acquired somewhat of the courtesy and polish proper to the natives of inner and Mahometan Syria.

The total number of the Maronite nation, or rather clan, is variously estimated from 150,000 to 230,000, or even more. We incline to the higher cypher: itself not a very considerable one, after all. Yet it more

than doubles the census of the Druses, by whom the Maronites were long held in subjection, and at last, in 1860, utterly discomfited, and that of the less renowned nor over-courageous Metewalees, by whom they are habitually insulted.

Here our reader may pause, and consult his reason or his sympathies.

We have now passed in review the three most numerous or the most talked-of Christian populations of the East: those with whose name Europe is not unfamiliar, and to whom her patronage is most readily extended. Eleven of the fourteen species of 'Eastern Christian' yet remain; but the minuter inspection of some of these would be superfluous, and of others uninteresting. Among the former we may number the Catholic or Protestant Armenians, in every respect —niceties of creed excepted—closely resembling their orthodox brethren; the Russianised Greeks, hardly distinguishable from the Phanariot; while the Syrians and Chaldæans, orthodox or Catholic, of Upper Syria and Mesopotamia, are best comprised in a general sketch of the inhabitants of those regions. The insignificance of the Eastern Latins eludes research; and want of sufficient information to reconcile or reject conflicting statements compels us to pass over in silence two remarkable, though somewhat anomalous, offshoots of Eastern Christianity,—the Nestorians of Kurdistan, and the more recently-famous Abyssinians. There yet remain, however, two classes—the one a clan, the other a nation—each possessed of high interest, and each deserving a distinct, however cursory, notice. These are the Greek Catholics, or Melchites, of Syria, and the Copts of Egypt.

The former present a phenomenon startling in European eyes, easily explicable from an Eastern point of

view. Bearing the name of Greeks, they have yet nothing in common either with the Hellenes of Athens or with the Byzantine Greeks of the Levant, except the use of the same ritual and liturgy, and these, too, not in Greek, but translated into excellent Arabic. The history of the Greek Catholics of Syria shall explain for us alike their name and their character. Long before the Christian era several tribes of the Yemen, Arab Arabs—so they style themselves, to indicate the unmixed genuineness of their race—emigrated northwards, and, after many fortunes, settled finally on the confines of Syria, to the east and south of Damascus. Their colony was again and again recruited, now from their Yemen brethren, now from the tribes of Nejed and Hejaz; but the superior dignity and number of Benoo-Ghassan gave them a common name as well as government; and with Jefnah, the son of 'Amr, began the series of Ghassanite kings, who reigned for more than four hundred years, till the rising sun of Mahomet eclipsed all the stars in the Arab sky. But few tribes have shone with brighter lustre in pre-Mahometan peace or war than Benoo-Ghassan; few have attained equal celebrity in prose or verse. Valour, generosity, eloquence—whatever forms the staple of Arab worth—all is ascribed to them, and the silence of their rivals admits the praise of their eulogists.

In common with their king, El-Hārith, the Benoo-Ghassan embraced Christianity towards the end of the fourth century, and, like most converts, adopted the ceremonial of their first apostles, namely, the Byzantine. Hence they derived, as Christians, the surname of Greeks, and hence for many centuries the use of the Greek language in their churches, or in the tents, of which, as their annals and some relics of portable

sanctuaries yet show, these half-nomades made use for the rites of worship. But that language, confined within strictly Church limits, remained always alien from the every-day life of Benoo-Ghassan; and their off-lying position, situated on the extreme verge of Byzantine rule, allowed but a feeble union, political or ecclesiastical, with Constantinople.

When the Mahometan armies, led by Khālid-ebn-Waleed and his brother generals, overran Syria, the greater number of the Ghassan Arabs adopted the congenial faith which fused them with their conquerors; some, however, availed themselves of the tolerance of 'Omar and the Ommey'ah Khalifs, and remained Christians. From their Mahometan neighbours they had nothing to fear; and their retired position beyond the passes of the Leja sheltered them alike from the dangerous sympathies or rivalities of their Western brethren, and from the blood-stained vicissitudes of Turkoman or Tartar conquest. Thus guarded, their history presents an enviable blank, till in the seventeenth century the comparative centralisation of the Turkish empire brought the Greek-Arabs of Hawran into a contact too intimate to be friendly with the encroaching Phanariotes of Constantinople; while at the same time European and especially French influence began once more to penetrate into the long-closed East. The Christian-Arabs of Ituræa and Trachonitis had, in their own and almost in English phrase, no 'back' to lean on; and the desire of finding one to prop them up against their overbearing co-religionists on the one side, and against the possible or existing hostilities of their non-Christian landsmen on the other, induced the Benoo-Ghassan Greeks to change the name of orthodox for Catholic: a name occasionally, by a somewhat factitious reminiscence of ancient partizan-

ship, commuted with that of Melchite. By this change of title they separated themselves from the orthodox or Byzantine Greeks of Syria, and obtained two things, —a hierarchy of their own, and the permissive substitution of the Arabic for the Greek language in their Church service. And thus they have remained a clan apart, readily distinguishable by the features of race much more than by those of dogma from the orthodox Greeks of the province; still more alien from the Syro-Chaldæan Maronite, also with much less Europeward sympathy and imitation.

Divided from their Arab brethren of town or tent by the profession of Christianity, they have, in almost every other respect, retained the distinctive characteristics of pure Arab descent. Their courage has been proved in many a well-fought fray with the wild tribes of the Desert and with the warrior Druses of the adjoining Lejà and the anti-Lebanon; their endurance has, within the last century, adorned the chronicles of Aleppo with a respectable list of martyrs who have preferred death to Phanariote subjection. In generosity and hospitality they surpass—we can ourselves witness to it—not only all other 'Eastern Christians,' but even many non-Arab Mahometan populations. In the national ornaments of eloquence and poetry they still, as of old, outshine every competitor. The Arabic language is spoken in an almost primitive purity even by the lowest and most uneducated classes amongst them, while it is cultivated in all its lexicographical and grammatical refinements by the higher; and the Greek-Catholic author, Elias Yazjee, has in our own time ventured to imitate and almost rival the exquisite 'Makamāt' of the justly-celebrated Hareeree. But the talent of the Melchite-Arab is principally shown in a capacity for the management of affairs, which has

peopled the palaces and residences of the governors and chief men of Syria with Greek-Catholic counsellors, treasurers, accountants, writers, till the number of posts of trust filled by them throughout these regions amazes by its disproportion with the scanty census of their clan. This heritage, unimpaired by time, by religious change, or by foreign influence, they have received and kept from their ancestors of the Yemen. But they share, with most other Arabs, an ineradicable, because an inbred, aversion to Ottoman rule; and when Ibraheem Pasha, acting as lieutenant for his still more talented father Mehemet-'Alee, appeared in Syria to dismember that province from the Turkish empire and unite it, so hope proclaimed, to a new and Arab kingdom, nowhere did the Egyptian find a readier welcome and a more cordial and effectual assistance to his projects than among the Melchite-Arabs of the land.

One fatal heritage, however, it must be allowed, the Greek Catholics have, along with their better heir-loom, derived from their ancestors of the desert—the spirit of divided counsels. The same impatient individualism, the same inaptness for unity or even co-ordination, which once, and only once, in Arab history yielded to the colossal genius of Mahomet, but which so soon after his death re-appeared to break up his great national work into countless fragments, never again to unite; this spirit still exists unabated, and repeats itself in every tribe, in every clan; nor has the brotherhood of Christianity, nor the fellowship of belief and rite, availed the Catholic-Greeks of Ituræa and Trachonitis, of Hawran and the Belkaà, from its fatal influence. 'See how these Christians hate one another,' may be a true, though a most discreditable satire elsewhere; it is nowhere truer than among the Melchite-Arabs, nowhere more fatal in its consequences. At war more

or less open with all around them, children of Ismael, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them, they are not the less at ceaseless conflict among themselves, always at variance, always disunited; till not so much as a single village acknowledges one hand, one purpose, or one action. No sooner has an individual of their number attained by energy or talent some superior position, than envy—the curse of the Arab race—raises up ten others to pull him down, and, after having done that, to quarrel among themselves for the very honours of which they have despoiled their tribesman, for no other reason than that he was worthy of them. Blood is perhaps shed; and then the feud is irreconcilable to the tenth generation. The quarrels of Beyt Aboo-Khāṭir and Beyt Ma'aloof, the rivalry of the Ḥārat-Rāseeyeh and the Ḥārat-et-Tahta, did more than even the arms of the Druse Khoṭṭar and the cowardice or treason of Yoosef Kerem for the ruin of Melchite Zaḥleh: nor could all the losses of 1860, in which fatal year none suffered more, because none fought more, than the Greek Catholics, persuade the Damascene survivors of the family of Ḥoneyneh to lay aside their hereditary enmity with the survivors of the family of Foreyj, and to remember at least the brotherhood of misfortune, since they had forgotten that of race and faith.

Blame and praise, yet more, perhaps, the latter than the former, are merited by another noted quality of the genuine Arab mind, faithfully reproduced in the Melchites of Central and Eastern Syria, namely, an immense personal pride; a pride based on self-consciousness, and hence unaugmented by prosperity, undiminished in adversity,—a pride independent of circumstance of sect, of condition, and even of age. As 'Abd-Allah, the son of the heroic Zobeyr, and a

child then of some ten years old, was playing with his young companions in one of the streets of Medeenah, the Khalif Ma'aweyah passed by on horseback with numerous attendants. 'Stand up out of the way of the Commander of the Faithful,' said some one of the riders to the boy. 'Neither are you my father that I should stand up to you for respect's sake, nor is the road so narrow that I should stand up to you for room's sake,' answered the child. Similar in character, but more dignified, was the reply of 'Omar, second of the Khalifs. Feeling thirsty during a conversation prolonged till late into the night with 'Amroo, the conqueror of Egypt, 'Omar rose from his feet, and, treading on tiptoe, lest he should disturb the slumber of an attendant, who, tired of watching, had, like the Lucius of Shakespeare, fallen asleep on the floor, crossed the room, quenched his thirst from a pitcher of water, and returned softly to his place. 'Commander of the Faithful, you might as well have awakened the servant and let him bring it you,' remarked 'Amroo. 'I got up, and I was 'Omar; I returned, and I am 'Omar,' answered the Khalif.

This is the pride which, among Mahometan Arabs, is enhanced, while veiled, by the modest title of the 'servant of God;' an affirmation which implies and almost expresses the negation of any other service or inferiority. Among the Pagans or Christians of the race it dispenses with even this disguise. But the defiant vaunts of a pre-Mahometan Ta'abbet-Shurran, the self-laudatory lyrics of a sceptical Aboo-l-'Ola or Mutenebbee, the devout exultations of innumerable religious or ascetic poets, from the great Gheelānee down to 'Abd-el-Ghănee En-Nābloosee, and the vigorous, though imitative, war-notes of Niḳōla-el-Khooree, Greek-Catholic priest of Aleppo, however they may

vary in the form and wording of the phrase, are truly one in meaning, and that meaning is unconquerable self-reliance. Christian humility may condemn, as Mahometan humility has frequently done, the vice of pride; but a philosophical mind will hardly be severe in its censure of what is the root of much real greatness, of noble exertion, of dignity in misfortune, and of moderation in success. The Melchite-Arab is often hated, but can rarely be despised; and his independent spirit, if it conciliate him few friends, merits him yet an esteem impossible to bestow on the borrowed vanity of the Greek, the boastful meanness of the Maronite, and the tame servility of most other 'Eastern Christians.'

The small number of the Melchite-Greeks—they scarce come up to fifty thousand souls—is about equally divided between the inhabitants of the towns Damascus, Zahleh, Aleppo, Beyrout, Seydà, and the rest, and the inhabitants of the open plains, of the Bekaà, Hawran, and the lands beyond the Jordan. We have already sketched the character of the townspeople; whoever visits them will be further struck by the good taste of their domestic and ecclesiastical architecture, in which the true genius of the Arab or Saracenic style is still conspicuous in graceful carvings, airy porticos, bold arches, and slender columns, and by the easy good manners of his Melchite host, who prides himself on courtesy and hospitality to his guests, after the old Arab fashion. A Greek-Catholic house at Damascus recalls the 'Thousand and One Nights,' both in the decorations of the building and in the refined politeness of its inhabitants. But the Damascene proverb, 'Like a rose, smell it from a distance, and ware thorns,' is too often exemplified in prolonged intercourse; quarrels are of frequent occurrence, and

hard to appease; and even a casual acquaintance, however amiably welcomed, will do prudently to avoid in his conversation whatever may wound a proud and susceptible race. But in literature, history, local government, poetry, and the like, the visitor, if qualified to enter on such topics, will find before him, in Arab phrase, a wide and fertile meadow.

The Melchite peasants are, at first sight, scarcely distinguishable from the Mahometan Arabs around them, whether in dress, habitation, or manner. The same broad cloak, dark, striped, or gaily embroidered—the same yellow and red handkerchief, bound with the same twist of camel's hair round the head—the same old-fashioned arms, sword, lance, or pistol—the same beard, the same idiom and language—the very churches are in their simplicity hardly dissimilar from village mosques. Nor only the Mahometan Arab peasant, but even the half Bedouin, the 'Arab Deerah,' or Bedouin of the frontier, is often reproduced among the Melchites of Ḥawran and the Balḳaà. Besides, the bonds of union between Christian and Mahometan are in these districts tightened by the doubtful neighbourhood of Druses, and the visits, more frequent than welcome, of the plundering Roo'ala and Woold-'Alee tribes. Whoever is not afraid of roughing it a little, may pass some weeks with pleasure, nor without profit, in the study of Arab manners and eloquence among the Greek-Catholics of Trachonitis; he will learn more there and better in a week than Beyrout, or even Aleppo, could teach him in a year.

The Melchite clergy, like that of all 'Eastern Christians,' whatever their sect, have considerable influence; yet they do not constitute a ruling class, as among the Maronites, or a caste apart, as among the Armenians and orthodox Greeks. They are often men of much

public spirit, active and well furnished with the current accomplishments of the East. Like all Eastern priesthoods, they are divided into two sorts—the married secular clergy and the unmarried monks, from amongst whom bishops and patriarchs are selected. These monks, in particular, are much superior to the ordinary run of their fellow-ascetics in the East, and the printing-press of the monastery of Showey'r—a press unrivalled throughout Syria in beauty of type and accuracy of labour—may almost atone for the ambitious revolt of its celibate workmen against the lawful authority of the Prior of Damascus. We should, however, not forget to add that similar praise is due, and for similar reasons, to the Catholic-Armenian monks, whether in Europe or Asia.

We have dwelt somewhat at length on the description of one of the smallest sections of Eastern Christianity, because that section alone, among all others, offers the agreeable spectacle of a race neither servile nor degenerate. Yet the want of servility implies the want of patrons, and the Melchite-Greeks of Syria neither possess the sympathy of Europe, nor, indeed, much desire its questionable advantage. European sympathy in the East too generally implies, for those who seek or enjoy it, a mendicant spirit, a dependent tone, an aimless dissatisfaction, a new element of intrigue, a loss of what one has for an unprofitable striving after what one has not. Further, it implies the hatred of the surrounding Mahometan populations and of the Ottoman Government itself, which, naturally enough, sees with disgust that its subjects have their faces habitually turned to the worship of another star than its own. Hence it may occasionally, and in the progress of events, imply violence and even massacre. Did not the Mahometans in general, and the Turks more espe-

cially believe, nor without reason, that the Eastern Christian population is the chosen field of European intrigue, the door always open for European interference;—did they, and could they, look on the Christians simply as subjects of the Empire, differing from themselves in form of belief only, united and loyal in all besides;—the Christians of the East would not be left in peace merely, but would take rank among the most favoured subjects of the Porte, from Constantinople to Bagdad. History testifies to their honourable security in the days of the Khalifs; and we have ourselves witnessed their promotion under the brief administration of Ibraheem Pasha. But now, and as a general rule, none are so ill looked on, and with but too much reason. The hatred, first originated by the Crusades, has been continued and aggravated by diplomatic protections and armed interference; and while we condemn the ferocity or fanaticism which presided at the risings of Aleppo and Nabloos—at the massacres of Jeddah and Damascus—we cannot wonder; rather, all things considered, might we think that the Mahometans, with Clive, have reason 'to be astonished at their own moderation.' Vexatious attempts to extend a miserable and undue influence—fallacious but incendiary hopes—promises even of support from the West or the North—encouragement to ready insolence, and irksome interference with the normal course of local government—all these have worked, and still work, till the Mahometan population and the Porte alike lose their long-provoked patience, and the debt of years is paid off in a day of blood and fire. Thus it is that remonstrances against imaginary oppressions and complaints of wrongs which do not exist end in giving reality to the very subjects of complaint and remonstrance; and intriguing ambition

has more than once viewed with open horror and secret satisfaction the realisation of evils to justify the protest which had preceded and caused them when as yet they were not. 'Save us from our friends,' would be the most rational prayer, did they but know it, of Eastern Christians; and in keeping aloof from European favour and influence the Melchite-Arabs of Syria do but show their wisdom.

There is yet another race of Eastern Christians, more ancient in their Christianity than Syrians, Maronites, and Armenians—of more undoubted descent than the Greeks of the Islands and Anatolia—a race that dates its nationality from no special creed or ritual, older than the Hebrew itself—old as the first rational records of the inhabited world, the Copts of Egypt.

By what fate a nation, born, it would seem, to command—the skilful organisers of a mighty and long-enduring kingdom—the claimants of eternity in the imperishable monuments of their greatness — the builders of Thebes and the Pyramids—the heirs of Rameses and Pharaoh—have for more than two thousand years remained the scarce impatient slaves, now of Persia, now of Greece, Rome, and Byzantium, then of Arab or Memlook princes, of Tartars and Turks, till they have sunk to their present deep degradation, were hard to say. The extinction of national energy is often a harder problem to solve than its origin and development. Yet even now, after so long a servitude and depression, they still retain, and this may increase our wonder, many of those very qualities which once rendered them lords, not of their own Egypt and Nile only, but of Syria, and of no inconsiderable portion of Asia also; crushed, but scarcely changed.

Since, however, the Arab conquest in 638, the blood

of the now Mahometan inhabitants of the Nile valley has so mingled with that of their Arab invaders, besides what further modification it may have admitted from Negro and Nubian, Circassian and Turk, that we will in these pages restrict the nationality as the name of Copt to the native Christians of the land, who have along with their peculiar form of belief retained also the purity of their national descent without any appreciable admixture.

Except a few thousands, five at most, of so-called Catholic Copts, who to all practical intents and purposes resemble the rest of the nation, the Copts of Egypt belong, by tradition if not by knowledge, to the Eutychian or ultra-Monophysite school; a circumstance which, combined with the hereditary remembrance of historical injuries, divides the Egyptian from the Greek by a deep cleft of national and religious hatred. Towards the Mahometan population around the Copts have little ill-will, though of all 'Eastern Christians' they have had the most cause to complain. The transient atrocities of the mad Khalif Ḥākim can, indeed, be scarcely laid to the charge of Islam, from which Ḥākim himself was notoriously an apostate; but there is no doubt that in following and purely Mahometan times oppression, and even persecution, have at frequent intervals weighed heavily on the Copts. The dangerous proximity of their Western co-religionists, the intrusive sanctity of Louis IX, and the Crusades, which involved the loss of other and better lives than those of the Crusaders themselves, may explain the anti-Christian bitterness of the rulers of Egypt; and the knowledge of the mediate cause may have rendered the Copts less hostile than might have been else expected to their immediate oppressors. Besides, they are a patient people.

In all times and under every dynasty the Copts have been the scribes and accountants of Egypt; a position productive of much influence to those who hold it, and also of not a little wealth. Their natural turn for calculation, however intricate—their habits of enduring and accurate labour—their sedentary and somewhat phlegmatic disposition—all agree to fit them for this kind of work, and to render them pre-eminent in it. The inventors of papyrus-scrolls and hieroglyphics are still the best book-keepers of the East; and the calculating and mechanical skill of old days, to which the hydraulic system, no less than the architectural monuments of the land, bears witness, is yet theirs, though employed at the bidding and for the behests of strangers. Instances are not wanting—how should they be in a land where law is arbitrary, and where public opinion has no general expression?—of Coptic accountants who have scandalously abused the confidence placed in them to their own personal advantage; but, on the whole, opportunity makes fewer thieves among the Copts than might have been reasonably anticipated; and, under its present *régime* of mercantile swindlers and foreign adventurers, the Egyptian Government may have room to regret the traditions of former times, and the diligent service and average fidelity of the Copts.

Commerce, that, at least, which involves distant venture, and speculation in general, have no special attraction for this race. Whatever wealth they may have, much or little, is not to be looked for among the investments of a Suez Canal or of a Government loan. That wealth, if not placed in local and immediate trade, in a corn-store or a warehouse, is by preference converted, where possible, into buildings and land. The Copt is fond of building; and when he can keep clear

of the wretched pseudo-French taste which has disfigured Egypt with huge uncomfortable card-paper edifices, and palaces or pavilions more suited, if even that, to the banks of the Seine than of the Nile, his style of architecture is not only, like that of his ancestors, solid and enduring, but handsome, and appropriate to the climate and scenery. Skilful and delicate stone-carving, patterns intricate, yet in harmony with the main lines of the building, nicely-balanced vaultings and galleries, graceful pillars, wonderful lattice-work, and bright colours so used as best to carry out the general effect, such is the genuine Egyptian architecture of our times, where applied to lesser or domestic edifices. But in larger constructions, and especially in some recently-built churches, the solidity and polish of the granite columns, and the bold grandiosity, almost grandeur, of the general outlines, heavier than the Saracenic, yet not so heavy as the older Byzantine, vindicate the descendants of the Lùxor and Esneh architects from the imputation of degeneracy.

We enter the house of Markos or Georgios; we are received in roomy apartments, well carpeted, and adorned with candlesticks or mirror-frames of massive silver, and furniture curious in carving and inlay. From the windows we look out under far-projecting eaves, into the dense shade of green gardens, where the waters of the Nile, infiltrated through the earth, and drawn up by the creaking water-wheel, or Na'oorah, run divided and subdivided into a thousand channels, under the broad leafage of bananas, magnolias, and a hundred other trees gay in flower and copious in fruit, or between luxuriant sugar-cane and the famed pot-herbs of Egypt, the regret and envy of Palestine; within, gaily-dressed servants, mostly negroes, bring in jewelled coffee or sherbet cups on

huge silver trays; the amber mouth-pieces of the long pipes are ringed with diamonds; and when the lady of the house appears, her massive gold ornaments, the pearls and diamonds on her head-dress, her ponderous bracelets and anklets, all gold, compel the exclamation ascribed, truly or not, to the great Prussian General on his view of London from the top of St. Paul's: 'My ——, what a plunder!' Though, by the way, the word 'plunder' in German has often the simple meaning of a multitude of good things, quite apart from the idea of their forcible appropriation; and Blucher, who was better at tactics than at vocabularies, may very possibly have only used the English word in its German sense, by a too literal translation of his thought. So be it far from us also to regard with violent covetousness the festive treasures of our Coptic hostess. Let us, now that coffee and sherbets are disposed of, enter into conversation with the master of the house. We find that he takes little interest in European news and politics; the very names of Gladstone and Disraeli are possibly unknown to him, and those of Alexander II. or Napoleon III. excite no sympathy: in a word, he has small science of the West, and even less disposition to share or follow its movements. But if our own reciprocal ignorance permits us to enter on such topics, we shall find him well instructed in the history of his own country; well read, too, in Arab and Mahometan literature; shrewd and far-sighted in his views of what may best befit Egypt and her government, her agriculture, irrigation, trade, and so forth; we shall find in him, too, a kindly and tolerant disposition, an easy-going view of life, a keen relish for its pleasures, and a singular love of music, dance, and song. His tastes, though more refined, are not in kind unlike those of his dusky and perhaps elder brother

the negro. In fact, some ethnologists go about to prove the Copts of Caucasian, Arian, or Turanian descent; they quote analogies, real or imagined, of language; measure the length and breadth of skulls; and discover conformities of jawbone or forehead. All this may be; but this much is certain, that a Copt is to all intents and purposes, in thought, ways, manners, and even, so far as we can learn from history, in his mode of government, when he had one, and fashion of religion, a whiter and more intelligent negro; not, indeed, after the type of the western coast, but that of Darfoor, Kordofān, Sennār, and the east inland districts. The very skull of the Darfooree and that of the Copt have the same well-arched, rounded form; and it is possible that the Copts, no less than the great bulk of the Arab nation, are not of Asian but African origin. Still, African or Asian, the Copt is always a son of Cleopatra, and a brother of the too fascinating Pleiads of our own day, the seven songstresses of Ḳena; and on near acquaintance, we shall be shocked or gratified to find that Christianity, whatever inner and invisible effects it may, doubtless, have on his spiritual being, has left the physical and moral man remarkably unchanged. We see a book lying on a corner of his divan—he was reading it when we came in—we take it up; it is not a political pamphlet, as, a hundred to one, it would have been under a Greek roof; nor is it a French or English vocabulary, the probable subject of Armenian study; nor is it a devotional translation of Liguori, or the 'Sacré Cœur,' the frequent ornament of a Maronite cushion; no, it is an odd volume of the 'Thousand and One Nights,' or the mirthful tales of the Rowdet-el-Abrār, or the chronicles of Makreezee, or a collection of Arab love-poems. The paper lying by is no Gazette, it is a series of accounts calculated

to a length of figures that might puzzle Bidder; or, perhaps, it is a copy of some choice passage from Hareeree. Did we find the Koran itself in company we need hardly be surprised.

Yet the Copt is a devout, indeed a superstitious Christian; only his Christianity, however intense in belief and copious in rite and symbol, does not greatly interfere with the general tenor of his practical and daily life, either for better or for worse. Nor are his dark-turbaned priests likely to teach him much of what we should term morality; guileless of it themselves, why or how should they impart it to their flocks? A 'Coptic marriage' has passed into a proverb; enough to say, that certain obliging and temporary family arrangements, said to prevail among the Abyssinians, are certainly and avowedly current among their fairer brethren and sisters of Egypt. It would be hard to suppose that the clergy deny themselves the indulgences which they permit or encourage in the laity; and the multiple precautions which fence in the exacter celibacy of the Patriarch himself seem to imply the rareness of the virtue they ensure. The fact is, that in all respects, dress and ecclesiastical ceremonies excepted, the clergy and the laity are much alike; unless that the former, condemned by the endless Ritual of Dioscoros to pass nigh half their lives in the mechanical and unmeaning repetition of words, and thus deprived of leisure for the studies and pursuits that in some degree form and instruct the mind of the latter, are considerably the more ignorant of the two. Even the Patriarch, when in his ordinary out-of-church dress, and seated among his town friends on an informal divan, might, to the unforewarned eye or ear, easily pass for a respectable landowner or a Cairo tradesman. Nor probably would his inner man, could we see it, offer

any very distinctive mark of superiority either intellectual or religious.

But a darker stain than that of ignorance or common laxity of morals rests on the monks of Upper Egypt, who for centuries past have constituted themselves the purveyors and even the makers of that half-sex which guards and disgraces the harems of the East. Many of the unfortunate slave-children, brought into the convent for the purpose, die under the knife; and the infamy of the ascetic operator is aggravated by the guilt of murder. However, in our own time a revival of humanity, perhaps of shame, has rendered the employment of eunuchs much rarer than formerly in most parts of the Turkish empire; and thus allows a hope that the failure of demand may finally induce the successors of Anthony and Pachomius to abandon a traffic insufficient to their greed, if not adverse to their conscience.

From the above sketch our readers may conclude, that although the Copts are gifted by nature with an intellect fully up to, and in some respects above, the average standard, education among them is desultory, partial, and following rather the local and Arab than any special track of its own. The ancient Coptic language is, indeed, still maintained in church rituals and the like; but though all among the clergy can read, we have never yet found any one of them who could understand the meaning of its characters. Coptic was, however, till within recent memory, spoken by the peasantry in some towns of Upper Egypt, at Achmim in particular; but want of school instruction has allowed this curious remnant of the past to fade away and ultimately disappear altogether. French or English is rarely studied in a Coptic school, a subject of regret, considering how widely these languages are diffused or diffusing among the other inhabitants of Egypt. Thus

in the general race the Copts are left behind, for want of acquirements so necessary that they are fast becoming common among the surrounding tribes of the land; and the old masters of Egypt have neglected, and still continue, with few and faint exceptions, to neglect the opportunity of re-asserting the empire of mind, since every other form of empire has irrevocably passed away from them. In a word, the Copts are non-progressive, a position equivalent, where all else advance, to retrogressive; their qualities, good or bad, they have received by inheritance of birth, and still retain; but the talent not put out to interest, and that wrapped up in a napkin, or hid in the earth, are much alike in uselessness; and the fate of such is often to be wholly taken away.

The census of Copts in Egypt and its neighbourhood is variously given from one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand; it certainly does not exceed the latter sum.

And with this brief notice of an aged, nor wholly unvenerable nation, we will conclude our present survey of 'Eastern Christians;' and recommend our own Western Christians to love their brethren at least wisely, before they love them perhaps too well.

VII.

THE MONASTERY OF SUMELAS.

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NOTICE.

A sketch of travel, in which I have endeavoured all along to give prominence to the pleasing rather than the unpleasing, the comely than the ungraceful. Here, as in the Fifth Essay, much that is topographical is superadded to personal delineation. Nor are the monks themselves deprived of their due of human sympathy; nor is acknowledgment wanting of their hospitality and other merits. But the reader may in conclusion not inaptly ask, 'If such be the best results of orthodox Greek training, what are the average ones? what the worse?'

'IN concluding the history of this Greek State, we enquire in vain for any benefit that it conferred on the human race,' says Finlay, as he winds up the crime-stained scroll of the Byzantine empire of Trebizond. A severer sentence could hardly have been passed; yet none perhaps has been ever more thoroughly borne out by facts and memorials, in annal or in monument. Originated, to borrow the same able historian's phrase once more, in accident, continued in meanness, and extinguished in dishonour, the Comnenian dynasty has left on the Pontic coast but few enduring records, and

those few unmistakeably stamped with the leading characteristics of the empire itself. The straggling, loose-built walls of the ill-constructed citadel of Trebizond; the dwarfish littleness and tasteless ornamentation of the over-vaunted church of St. Sophia; the still feebler proportions of the churches of St. Eugenius, St. John, and others, now doing duty as mosques in different quarters of the town, belong to and attest the type of those who reared them; and their defects are rendered but the more glaring by a servile attempt to copy the great though ungraceful models of earlier Byzantine date. If this be true, as, begging Fallmereyer's pardon, true it is, of the quondam capital, what can we expect in the less important and outlying points of the ephemeral empire, where the littleness of art is still more disadvantageously contrasted with the gigantic proportions of nature?

Yet even here, among these relics of a debased age, we occasionally come across some grand constructional outline indicative of others than the Comnenes; of nobler races, or at least of superior organisation. Such are the Cyclopean fragments at Kerasunt, the broken columns of Kyrelee, and the solid though shattered walls of 'Eski-Trabezoon,' or 'Old Trebizond,' situated some sixty miles east of the present town. With these may rank the rock-built monasteries scattered throughout the mountains that line the coast; and which, though bearing the traces of later modification and, too often, defacement, are yet not unworthy relics of the time when Chrysostom preached and Pulcheria reigned. And of these is the monastery of the Virgin, the Panagia of Sumelas.

High-perched among the upper ranges of the Kolat mountain chain, south-east of Trebizond, from which it is distant about thirty miles inland, Sumelas is the

pilgrim-bourne of innumerable 'Greeks,' to use a customary misnomer for the mongrel population of Byzantine, Slavonian, and Lazic origin that here professes the 'orthodox' faith, who flock to the shrine of the Panagia on the yearly recurrence of her great festival day, the 27th of August in our calendar, the 15th in theirs. At other seasons her visitors are comparatively few; indeed, snow, rain, and mist render the convent almost inaccessible for full eight months of the twelve; nor can the road be called easy travelling at any time. Hence the convent, in spite of its wide-spread nor undeserved reputation, is visited by Europeans seldom, by the inert and uninformed Levantines hardly ever. For us, however, Ovid's fellow-convicts in our Pontine Sydney, a trip to Sumelas, so managed as to coincide with one of the rare intervals of clear weather on this murky coast, and yet avoid the crowd and other inconveniences of the festival epoch, was too desirable a break in the sameness of Turko-Levantine life not to be undertaken; and a fine week towards the beginning of August at last afforded the wished-for opportunity.

So in the early dawn, while the waning moon yet glittered above the morning star in a calm slaty sky, we started, a band of five horsemen in all, two negro servants included, bound for the celebrated 'Mariamana,' as the convent is here popularly called; and rode out of Trebizond with the huge bare mass of Boze-Tepeh, or the 'Brown Hill,' once Mount Mithrios, on our right, and the black and brackish pool, entitled by geographical courtesy a sea, on our left. We followed the new road, that, when Turkish engineers shall have learnt the first rudiments of their art, is to render the route between Trebizond and Erzeroom amenable to wheeled carriages instead of the classic caravans that now, as for centuries bygone, alone thread the double mountain

pass. For at present the roughest waggon that ever lumbered along a Devonshire lane could not venture on four miles of the Erzeroom track without an unpleasant certainty of being either upset or jolted to shivers on the way. To us, however, on the present occasion this matters little, for Turkish horses are sure-footed as Spanish mules; so on we ride; and after rounding the great corner cliff that, jutting right out on the water's edge, retains the classic-sounding name of Eleusa, we enter on the sandy delta of the Pixartes river, now degraded into the 'Deyermend-Déréh,' or 'Mill-Course' of Turkish nomenclature. Its valley, penetrating south-west far into the mountains, has at all times served as directing line to the great commercial track that, bending eastwards to Erzeroom, brings Koordistan and Persia into communication with the basin of the Black Sea and Constantinople. Up this valley we now turn, and soon cross a huge barrier-ridge of rolled stones, the joint work of sea and river in glacial times, when the now shrunk torrent was full fed by vast tracts of snow and ice in its parent mountains. And here I may add parenthetically that over all the highland of inner Anatolia, from the Lazistan coast range to the water-shed of the Euphrates, I have met with numerous traces of that cold Post-Pliocene epoch, such as furrowed rocks, erratic boulders, rounded prominences, and huge moraines, stretching far down into the plains from the summits that even now, though long since bared of their icy caps by a milder climate, maintain patches of snow all the year through.

Next we thread a pass of remarkable beauty, where picturesque rocks jut out among thick brushwood, or steep slopes, all grass and wild flowers, run high up against the sky; at times the gorge narrows into a ravine, where black volcanic crags barely leave room

for the pathway along the right bank of the brawling torrent; while the old traffic-route, despairing of a footing below, passes by the heights several hundred feet overhead. The general type of scenery recalls North Wales, or the Rothen-Thurm pass of the Carpathian district. At last, just as the eastern sun bursts in full light and heat over the fir-crowned mountain tops on our left, we reach a point where the valley expands into a wide marshy plain, thick-planted with maize, while the roadside is lined with rows of *Kh*ans, or halting-places—long low sheds, with no accommodation to offer beyond shelter from the weather, and the possibility of fire-lighting: some are in good repair; others in various stages of broken roof and crumbling wall; others mere traces. For in *Kh*ans, as in every other kind of building, Eastern custom or superstition forbids repair, and prefers to supplement the injuries of time or accident by a new construction *in toto* alongside, rather than attempt the restoration of the old one once decayed. Hence, among other causes, the frequent vestiges of deserted houses, mosques, and the like, that cumber the lines of traffic everywhere in Eastern Turkey, and convey to the traveller's mind the idea of even more ruin and decay than is really the case; being in fact the symbols of transportation as often as of desertion.

Little shops, mixed up with the *Kh*ans, offer eggs, sour apples, coarse tobacco, cigarette paper, matches, nuts, cheese, and such like articles of cheap consumption to the caravan-drivers and other passers-by. All around the hill-sides, here more moderate in their slope, and patched with corn, maize, and tobacco, are studded with rubble-built cottages, each one at a neighbourly distance from the other; these, taken collectively, form the village of 'Khosh-Oghlan,' or the 'Pleasing-Boy.'

Such is the name; though who was the individual boy, and in what respect he made himself so particularly agreeable, were vain now to enquire. It is the first stage of the inland journey; so, obedient to the usage of which our attendants have not failed with a broad African grin to remind us, we alight at one of the booths for a cup of coffee, over-roasted and over-boiled as all Turkish coffee is, yet refreshing; and then go on our way. Seven or eight miles more lead us still up the same 'Deyermend' valley, past some pretty Swiss-like wooden bridges, and many fine points of mountain view, past the straggling hamlet of 'Yeseer-Oghlou,' or the 'Son of the Prisoner'—a Prisoner and a Son now no less forgotten by history and tradition than the 'Pleasing-Boy' before mentioned—where, not long since, two Frenchmen, hacked and slashed, paid with their life-blood the penalty of the meddlesome hectoring usual to their tribe among strangers; till we reach the high stone-arched bridge called of 'Maturajik,' and, crossing by it to the other side of the valley, climb aloft above the torrent as it forces its way through huge clusters of columnar basalt, piled up tier over tier of rusty brown; then descend to the little plain known, as are also the many scattered houses that jot the green or brown mountain sides all round, by the title of 'Jevezlik,' or the 'Place of Walnut-trees:' these last stand before us, green and spreading by the water's edge. Here again the road runs the gauntlet between shops and *Khans*, for we have now done eighteen miles, the ordinary day's march of a caravan from Trebizond. Besides, Jevezlik is a place of some note, partly as the residence now of a district sub-governor, formerly of a dreaded 'Dereh-Bey,' or 'Lord of the Valley'—a euphemism for Lord of Robberies—but more so from its central position,

which renders it the meeting-point of three great tracks, and which would in classic Italy have insured its dedication to 'Diana Trivia:' the winter road to Erzeroom; the summer ditto; and the road of Sumelas or Mariamana. Of these routes, the first follows the main valley south-west up to where it culminates in the far-off snow-flecked summits of Ziganah; the second, or summer road, scrambles rather than climbs due south across the dreary heights of 'Kara-Kapan,' or 'Black-Covering,' so called, I conjecture, from its almost perpetual veil of cloud and mist, whence—but it must have been on an unusually clear day—Mr. Layard, if memory serves me right, makes Xenophon and his Greeks shout their θάλαττα, θάλαττα; the third path, that which leads to Sumelas, goes off south-east by a side gorge that here falls into the Deyermend valley. The sun is now high and hot; so we halt for a noon-tide bait in the spare room of a rickety Turkish coffee-house overhanging the torrent; receive the visits of some land-farmers, conservative and discontented as farmers are by prescriptive right all the world over; feast on brown bread and eggs fried in grease, *vice* anything else, unattainable in this corner of the gorgeous East; and would fain have crowned our midday rest with a nap on the floor, had not the immemorial fleas of Asia Minor pronounced their absolute veto on any such proceeding.

Well; Sumelas, not Jevezlik, is our goal. So, noon over, we remount and turn south-east, following over rock and grass the rise of the noble mountain cleft, hemmed in here and there by great basaltic masses, suddenly protruding through the limestone rocks of an older formation. Next to the cape of Hieros, or Yoros, with its fan-spread columns, the basalt pillars of Melas are the grandest—I have never visited either

Skye or the Giant's Causeway—that it has been my fortune to witness anywhere. Next we cross the fierce but now diminutive torrent on a covered wooden bridge that might have been imported from Zug or Luzern; and begin the final Sumelas ascent.

It follows for several miles the upward course of a deep and precipitous ravine, where huge rocks and cliffs, many hundred feet in height, are interspersed among or overhang forests of walnut, oak, beech, and pine, that might do honour to the backwoods of America themselves. Under the shade, now of the branching trees, now of the wall-like crags, winds the path, bordered by a dense fringe of laurel, dwarf fir, azalea, rhododendron, and countless other tangled shrubs; it is kept in fairly good order, propped up by stone counterforts, and protected by trenches and dykes against the descending watercourses, by the care of the monks, whose convent we are now approaching. On either side and in front glimpses of bare and lonely heights, herbless granite, and jagged ridges far up in the blue sky, show that we have penetrated far into the Kolat-Dagh, the great Anatolian coast chain, that even here averages ten thousand feet in elevation, and ultimately out-tops the Caucasus, its northern rival and parallel. At last a turn of the way brings us half-round at the foot of a monstrous rock that has for a long while barred our direct view along the ravine in front; and there, suspended like a bird's-nest in air far overhead, we see rejoicingly the white walls of the convent, the object of our journey.

One last corkscrew ascent of almost Matterhorn steepness brings us up through the dense forest that somehow manages to cling to and girdle the cliff half-way; till, just on the edge of the leafy belt, we reach the narrow ledge, almost imperceptible from below, on

which the convent is niched rather than built. Two-thirds in length of this ledge are occupied every inch, from precipice above to precipice below, by the monastic buildings; the remaining third partly forms a kind of landing-place, where visitors may wait admittance within the claustral precincts, partly is occupied by large stables and outhouses for horses and cattle. From this shelf sixty-six stone steps, of recent construction, conduct to a little iron-bound door in the convent wall, conveniently commanded by some grated windows above. Till within the last few years a long wooden ladder, let down as circumstances required, then drawn up again within, afforded the sole and occasional link between the monastery and the outer world; while sinister arrivals might, if they tried entrance by other means of their own, receive from the flanking windows a warmer welcome than they expected or desired.

Our coming has already been witnessed by the monks; and as we slowly climb the steps, the iron door ahead half opens for a moment, in sign of recognition, then closes again, while consultation goes on within as to our admittance. After a short interval the portal reopens, and displays an old monk, in the dirty blue dress and black head-gear of his order, that of St. Basil—I may as well remark here that the orthodox Greek Church recognises this one order only; a silent protest against the more modern multiplicity of Latin discipline—standing in the entry, while other brethren group behind him in the dim perspective of the narrow vaulted passage. Glancing at us, he notices the dagger and silver-mounted pistol of our principal negro attendant, and requests him to consign these ornaments to monastic keeping before crossing the threshold. To this preliminary ceremony the Dar-

fooree objects; nor does the argument that such is the rule of St. Basil, with which the Sultan himself, were he present in person, must, under penalty of non-admittance, comply, produce any effect on African obstinacy. So, armed as he is, he turns back to look after the horses; while the monks obligingly assure us that neither animals nor groom shall want for anything during our stay here.

We enter the passage. The 'Economos' or Accountant of the monastery, an elderly man, long-bearded and long-vested, at his side a stout, jovial, gray-haired, red-cheeked old monk, apparently verging on the seventies, but hale and active, our destined 'bear-leader,' and several other brethren, all blue-dressed, bearded, and dirty, came forward to greet us; and conduct us up and down by a labyrinth of little corridors, ruinous flights of stairs, dingy cells, and unsavoury well-like courtyards, all squeezed up close between the rock on one side and the precipice on the other; till, having thus traversed the 'old buildings,' which form an irregular parallelogram about two hundred feet in length by forty in breadth, we emerge on a little flagged space, neater kept than the rest; and find ourselves in presence of the famous shrine of the Panagia herself.

The body of the church, a cavern natural in its origin, but probably enlarged by art, is hollowed out in the rock, which here faces due east. The sanctuary, which, in accordance with the prescription of ecclesiastical tradition, also points eastwards, is here represented by a small construction, double staged, about fourteen feet in total height, and sixteen in length; its general appearance from without brings to mind the conventional ark of Biblical pictures and children's toy-shops. It projects at right angles from the stone wall with

which the entrance of the cavern all round it has been closed; and, like that wall, is covered with the most appalling specimens of modern Greek mural painting; impossible saints with plate-like halos; crowded days of judgment where naked but sexless souls are being dragged by diabolical hooks into the jaws of a huge dragon, which is hell; Scriptural scenes from the stories of Moses, Elijah, &c., where large heads, no perspective, and a stiffness unrivalled by any board are the chief artistic recommendations; red, yellow, and brown the favourite colours; the whole delicately touched up with the names of innumerable pilgrims, mostly terminating in 'aki' or 'ides,' scratched, with no respect of persons, across saints, souls, demons, and deities alike. The entrance door is close alongside of the sanctuary; and three square grated windows admit the light above. The roofing of the sanctuary is sheet copper, thick encrusted with dirt; so thick, indeed, as to enable the monks to assure you, without too violent a contradiction of your own ocular evidence, that it is not copper, but silver; the costly gift—so continue the same chroniclers—of the famous Sultan Murad IV. himself; who, when on his way from Constantinople to Bagdad to fight the Persians, seems to have led his army—Heaven only knows how or why—across the Kolat mountains, and to have encamped, horse, foot, and artillery, on the goat's perch of the ravine here opposite. That Sumelas lies hundreds of miles away from the route which the said Sultan really took, and that Hannibal or Napoleon I. himself would have been puzzled to drag the smallest field-piece among these precipices, are considerations which matter nothing in legend. Accordingly, so continues the tale, when the ferocious Murad first turned his bloodshot eyes on the convent, he enquired of his Begs and

Pashas what that building might be; and, on their answer that it was the abode of Christian monks, gave immediate orders to his artillerymen to batter it down. But, lo! no sooner were the cannon pointed at the consecrated edifice than they spun round self-moved, and began firing among the Sultan's own troops. Hereon Imperial amazement and further enquiry; met by the information that all this was the doing of the miraculous Virgin, the Panagia, who, or whose picture—for in popular orthodox as in Roman devotion the distinction between the symbol and the original is inappreciable to any but a controversialist—tenanted the monastery. Murad, deeply impressed, and no wonder, by the miracle and its explanation, at once abandoned his destructive intentions, did due honour to the Panagia and her ministers, and amongst other offerings presented the silver roof in question—only he never did anything of the sort, and it is really copper.

Looking up, we now perceive that the rock above, which here overhangs sanctuary and court in an almost threatening manner, supports in one of its darkest recesses a little Byzantine picture, the Theotokos, of course. Dingy and faded, till at first sight hardly discernible from the damp stone against which it rests, this painting occupies the exact spot—we have the monks' word for it—where in the fifth century some goatherds discovered the original Panagia, the work of St. Luke, here placed by angelic agency seemingly in order to keep it out of the way. Now, however, it is deposited for more convenient veneration in the sanctuary below, where we will visit it a little later; but the copy has itself, like iron near a magnet, acquired a good share of useful efficacy by juxtaposition. From the rocky brow above, in front of the

picture, fall without ceasing drops of water, which to the eyes of faith are always three at a time, neither more nor less; but for all I looked I could not detect any special numerical system in their fall; these drops carefully collected in a little cistern below possess miraculous virtues equal to any recorded of the same element in the veracious pages of Monseigneur Gaume.

While we have been thus gazing and listening, the four church bells, hung outside in a pretty little open belfry of four light columns and graceful arching—the work and its costs having been alike furnished by the devotion of a wealthy Russian pilgrim—have been ringing a very hospitable though untuneable peal in honour of our arrival; and the monks invite us to enter the sanctuary without further delay. But it is near sunset; and the monotonous chanting of the priests inside warns us that vespers are even now going on, and the church full of worshippers. Unwilling to disturb the congregation, we defer our visit; and, adding that we are somewhat tired by our day's journey, we are conducted by our hosts across the court-yard, and up a neat stone staircase to our evening quarters, namely, the chief apartment in the 'new buildings.'

These, completed only three years since, rise seven stages in total height, vaults included, from the precipice below to the beetling crag above; the front faces east; and its white-painted masonry, its four tiers of large square windows, and its handsome open gallery supported on slender stone pillarets that run along the whole length of the topmost story, are what first attract the admiration of the traveller as he reaches the opposite point of the ravine. The edifice is eight rooms in length and only one in thickness throughout; but the great solidity of the stone work, and the

shelter of the hollow rock in which it nestles, neutralise the danger of over-height. From foundation to roof a narrow space, protected from the weather by the wide eaves above, is left between the building and the crag behind; and here winds an ingenious zigzag of galleries and staircases, all stone, that afford entrance to the several chambers of each story. Beneath, and partly hollowed out in the living rock, are cellars and store-caverns to which the monks alone have access; besides a large reservoir of excellent water, filled from the oozings of the inner mountain. The entire work, whether considered in itself or in the difficulties of scaffolding and construction, where not a spare inch is left of the narrow shelf on which the building stands, balanced as it were hundreds of feet in mid-air, is one of no small skill; and its well-considered proportion of wall, window, and gallery, with the just adaptation of every part to the practical exigencies of domestic use, claim high constructive praise, and evince a degree of good taste not always to be found among the house-architects of Western Europe. Yet the builders of 'Mariamana' were from no European, not even from the Constantinopolitan school; they were mere indigenous stone-cutters, 'Greek' the most, from the adjoining villages of Koroom, Mejid, and Stavros.

We stroll along the top-story corridor, the openings of which are guarded by high iron railings, and look across the dizzy depths below, whence rises the ceaseless roar of the Melas torrent, and beyond the dense masses of beech and pine that cluster on the ravine side opposite, to the lonely peaks of Kolat-Dagh, seemingly close in front, and rose-tinted with the last rays of the setting sun. Soon the evening air blows cool; at this elevation—4,100 feet above the sea, as my aneroid informs me—the night temperature is

rarely such as to detain one long out of doors. Five months of the year on an average the convent snow lies unmelted, and for five more of the remaining seven mist and rain are the rule, not the exceptions. The very cats of the establishment, large, tame, and well fed, bear witness by their long fur and bushy fox-like tails to the general coldness of the atmosphere in which they live. Still the site is healthy, and in proof of this an old centenarian monk presents himself to view hale and hearty among his comrades, who, to judge by appearances, are mostly themselves in a fair way to rival his longevity. But besides, absence of care, and indeed of brain-work in general, has doubtless something to do with this prolonged and vigorous vitality. Nor have they many privations to endure, except what the numerous fasts and abstinences of their antique ritual impose; the convent is wealthy to a degree that might have long since moved the greed of any but a Turkish Government, while the monks in residence are not over numerous—fifteen, indeed, is their average. However, besides its regular inmates, this convent contains also several members of distant monasteries from different parts of Anatolia, Roumelia, and even Syria, sent hither to a quiet retreat, or mitigated prison, or both, thus to expiate some past breach of discipline, or to prevent some menaced scandal. Lastly, a large number of the monks—though how many my grizzled informant could not, or perhaps would not, say—are scattered on longer or shorter leave of absence without the walls, in quest of the temporal welfare of the community, or superintending the numerous farms belonging to it, some by purchase, more by legacy. For in the Orthodox, no less than in the Latin Church, the passports of the rich to a better world are seldom countersigned 'gratis.'

As a natural consequence, the fields and havings of the Sumelas Panagia lie thick scattered along the entire South Euxine coast from Trebizond to Constantinople, and bring in revenues sufficient for a moderate-sized duchy. Nor is all this wealth consumed in selfish indulgence, or hoarded up by miserly precaution. While the monks still, as before, content themselves with the narrow and cranky buildings of the original convent, the handsome and commodious lodgings of newer construction, the cost of which cannot have fallen short of 4,000*l.* at least, are freely abandoned to the eight thousand pilgrims or guests who, on a rough calculation, pass from twenty-four hours to fifteen days, some more, some less, within these walls, free of board as of shelter. Nor should we forget the neat pathway, solidly constructed and sedulously repaired by the sole care and cost of the monks, along many difficult miles of mountain ravine, which else would be not only dangerous but almost inaccessible; a path, thanks to the self-taught workmen of Mariamana, now safe, and even, comparatively speaking, commodious—qualities estimable in roads and creditable to the road-makers anywhere; most creditable, because most rare, in Anatolia.

Escorted by our hosts we re-enter our night's lodging. The large and handsome room—neat still, because new—is garnished with divans, carpets, and a supplementary stove for cold weather in the centre; over the fireplace hangs conspicuously a photographic print of Russian manufacture, representing an apocryphal act of Cretan heroism, wherein a priest is enacting, torch in hand, an imitation of 'Old Minotti's' suicidal exploit in Byron's *Siege of Corinth.* Perhaps it is meant as a hint on occasion for the 'Economos' of Sumelas: if so, let us hope that he will be slow to take it. The

period of strict abstinence, which among the 'orthodox' precedes the great festival of the Virgin, has already commenced; and as the hour for supper draws on, we own to a horrible anticipation of finding ourselves included among the eaters of olives and unseasoned vegetables—poor restoratives after a long day's ride. But such treatment of their guests forms no part of our hospitable entertainers' programme. Soup, flesh, fowl, eggs, caviare, butter, and so forth, soon cover the table; and the wine, produce of conventual vineyards, is good enough to show how excellent a liquor might be afforded by the Anatolian grape under more skilful culture. Coffee and tea follow, and when time comes to rest we recline on well-stuffed mattresses beneath quilted coverings of silk, embroidered with gold and silver thread, not unworthy of the state-bed of Elizabeth at Kenilworth, or of James at Hatfield.

Next morning we pay our promised visit to the church, and entering by the narrow door at the angle of the sanctuary, find ourselves in a cavern about forty feet in length and breadth, scarcely sixteen in height, lighted up by the three east windows in the outer wall. Sides and roof are decorated with paintings in the style already described, where to disjoin art from devotion, and to throw ridicule on both, seems the aim; damp and incense-smoke have, however, charitably done much to cover the multitude of pictorial sins. Within the church are many other objects worthier of observation, and some even of real interest. At the entrance of the sanctuary hang, one over the other, two small silk curtains, richly worked; which being withdrawn disclose to our view the identical Panagia, the likeness (Heaven forfend it!) of the Virgin by St. Luke—of equal merit in all respects, natural and supernatural, as of equal antiquity, it would seem, and

certainly of equal authenticity, with the Madonna of Santa Maria Maggiore at Rome. A blackish outline, chiefly defined by the gold-leaf ground that limits head and shoulders, indicates the figure. Close beside it hang, obliquely from the ceiling, like masts in slings, two huge wax tapers, wrapped in some material, costly, but now indistinguishable through its dingy encrustments; these form part of the præter-historical peace-offering of Sultan Murad IV., mentioned further back. Near the tapers is also suspended an enormous circular chandelier of silver gilt, with a quantity of little ex-votos, silver boats, gold filagree ornaments, coins, and the like, dangling from its rim: this too, if we credit the monks, is the memorial of the repentance of another Sultan, Selim II.—on what occasion shall be related in its place. Meanwhile we deposit the offering that courtesy requires in the all-receiving platter before the Panagia; and are next called on to revere the special object of devout pilgrimage, a small silver rocking-cradle, of pretty but not ancient workmanship, consecrated to the goddess of the shrine. Into this cradle a piece of money (the more precious the metal, the greater its efficacy) is to be laid; after which the pilgrim, having thrice raised and lowered the toy and its contents on the palm of his or her hand, before the unveiled Panagia, deposits it on the plate of offerings. Should the cradle when thus set down continue to rock, the happy votary will infallibly become before long a father or a mother, as the case may be; its immobility, on the contrary, is a sad but conclusive presage of married sterility. Now barrenness is at the present day no less an opprobrium in the East than it was in the age of Hannah and Pheninnah; and its prevention or cure is the motive of far the greater number of pilgrimages to Maria-

mana; even newly-married Mahometans, not to mention Armenians, Latins, and other unorthodox Christians of either sex, prove by their frequent visits to the cradle of Sumelas how catching a thing is superstition. The residue of the pilgrims are mostly petitioners for the recovery of a sick child, or relative, or self, and for them also the cradle obligingly extends the subject-matter of its oracles. The origin of this particular observance probably does not go back further than Comnenian times; though the monks refer it, like the foundation of the convent itself, to the fifth century.

Passing rapidly over the inspection of a copious store of ecclesiastical vestments and gewgaws, that might call forth the raptures of a ritualist or a pawnbroker, we come in front of a small wooden cabinet, placed in a recess of the cavern, and carefully locked. This the monks now open, and draw forth from its nook the famous Golden Bull of Alexios III., Emperor of Trebizond, who in 1365 confirmed by this document the privileges and exemptions of the Sumelas convent and its possessions; and, amongst other precious tokens of Imperial liberality, bestowed on them the right of defending themselves as best they could against the Turkoman inroads, which the sham empire was unable to check, even at but a day's distance from the capital. At the head of the 'Bull,' a long narrow strip of rolled paper, appear the portraits of Alexios and his wife, the Empress Theodora, holding between them on their joined hands a small model church, much as ecclesiastical donors love to appear in Western monuments of a corresponding age: the characters of the writing are large and fine drawn; the Imperial autograph, in huge red ink letters, sprawls below; but the gold seals once appended have long since disappeared from the foot of the scroll. The most remarkable feature in this

memorial of later Byzantine times (published at full length by Fallmereyer in 1843) is the inflated verbosity of the style; a verbosity subsequently adopted with many other vices of the degraded empire by the victorious Ottomans.

Of more real importance, though inferior in antiquity, is the paper next unrolled before our eyes, namely, the firman of the Sultan Selim II., also confirmatory, but this time to good purpose, of all the old monastic rights, privileges, and exemptions. It is remarkable that in this document the handwriting conforms to the stiff and old-fashioned Naskhee of Arab origin, instead of the elegant semi-Persian Divanee of later official use. The quotations from the Koran that garnish it from first to last exemplify a tone frequently adopted by the Osmanlee rulers in their day of power. Certainly no miracle is needed to account for the concession of this favour, one in entire accordance with Turkish and even with Mahometan usage everywhere. The Sumelas monks have, however, a legend ready to hand, and thus it runs: Once on a time Sultan Selim came on a hunting-party to this neighbourhood, and while pursuing his chase up the Melas ravine beheld for the first time the great monastery. To become aware of its existence and resolve its destruction were one and the same thing in the mind of the tyrant. But before he could so much as form his guilty thought into words of command, he was stricken with paralysis, and laid up a helpless sufferer in a village close by. There he might have remained to the end of his wicked life, had not the Panagia graciously appeared to him in a vision, and suggested the expiation of his crime and the simultaneous recovery of his health by means of the document in question, further accompanied by the douceur

of the great circular chandelier that we have already seen suspended before the sanctuary; and, to borrow Smith the weaver's logic, the firman and the chandelier are both alive at this day to testify the prodigy: 'therefore deny it not.' Anyhow, the firman of Selim II. proved a more efficacious protection to the monastery and its land than the 'Bull' issued by the Comnenian emperor; and its repeated renewals by succeeding Sultans, from Selim II. to Abd-el-Mejeed, form a complete and not uninstructive series in the Mariamana archives, to which we refer the denouncers of Turkish intolerance and Islamitic oppression.

Here were also many other curious documents and manuscripts laid up, say the monks; but a fire which some years since consumed a part of the convent, and pilfering archæological pilgrims, are assigned as the causes of their disappearance. A Greek Testament, supposed to be of great antiquity, was shown us; but the paper on which it is written, and the form of the characters, bring its date down to the fourteenth or thirteenth century at earliest.

We go the round of what else remains for notice in the cavern: a fine carved reading-desk, eagle-supported, for the lessons of the day; three or four more Panagias, all miraculous; more church plate; a painted screen, and the like; but these objects have no exceptional interest, and we soon find ourselves again in the dazzling sunlight of the paved court outside. Next we roam about the 'old buildings,' timber the most, with huge overhanging eaves, and something of a Swiss cottage appearance. But nowhere does any inscription, carving, or the like indicate date or circumstance of construction, nor has any diary or 'log-book' of events ever been kept within these walls. The memories of the monks, mere uneducated peasants they, form the

only chronicle; and memory, like other mental faculties, has but a narrow range when deadened by the sameness of a life that unites agricultural with conventual monotony. Little is here known of the past, and that little is uncertain in epoch and apocryphal in detail, if not in substance. Nor has the establishment ever undergone what, had it taken place, would have been of all other things a sign-mark in its annals—the profanation of the spoiler. Roving bands, Koorde or Turkoman, have indeed been often tempted by the report of hoarded treasures to prowl about the woods of Sumelas, and have cast wistful eyes at the Panagia's rock-perched eyrie; but the narrow path that winds up the precipice is available only at the good-will and permission of the convent inhabitants themselves; and from all other sides, around, above, the birds that flap their wings against the sheer crag of a thousand feet and more could alone find access to Mariamana; while a blockade, if attempted, would be indefinitely baffled by the capacious store-rooms and cisterns of the fabric. From the Ottoman Government itself the monks, like most of their kind in other parts of the empire, have experienced nothing but protection, or, better still, non-interference; and the freedom of their hospitality, while it does credit to the convent, bears also good witness to its inviolate security. This hospitality is indeed proportioned in some degree to the rank and social position of visitors or pilgrims, but no one is wholly excluded from it, nor in any direct recompense exacted or received from rich or poor, 'Greek' or stranger. Of course the shrine gets its offerings—small ones, as a rule, from Greeks; larger from Russians and Georgians; most munificent in any case when prayers are believed to have been heard. The birth or convalescence of a child contributes to the wealth no less than to the

fame of the Panagia. But payment for board and lodging is unknown, however numerous the guests, and however long their stay. Indeed, so scrupulous are the monks regarding the gratuitousness of their welcome, that when, after having deposited our offerings in the church, we wished before leaving the convent, some hours later, to make an additional and more general donation, it was at first absolutely refused, and was at last only accepted under the assurance that it had been originally meant for the sanctuary, where its presentation at the foot of some shrine or other had been, said we, unintentionally omitted.

Yet hospitality is after all a virtue that has no necessary connection either with present civilisation or with future progress; one that to fail in is a reproach, but to possess no very high praise. Besides, it is, with comparatively rare exceptions, a quality too common in the East for special commendation; Koordes, Turkomans, Arabs, Armenians and the rest are all hospitable after their kind, some profusely so. What particular merit then shall we assign to the monks of Sumelas to justify the existence of a not inconsiderable number of men, and of widely extended demesnes, withdrawn from the natural current of life, and the 'ringing grooves' of the onward world? Learning these monks certainly neither store up in themselves, nor encourage in others; of moral science and teaching they are wholly ignorant; in agricultural industry they do not exceed the average or tend to improve the practice; from a religious point of view they represent and aid to maintain one of the grossest compounds of fable, bigotry, and superstition that has ever disgraced the inventors. Individually benevolent, hospitable, industrious even, they belong to a system essentially narrow, retrograde, odious. If this be the 'Cross' of

the East, what advantage has it over the 'Crescent?' And is it from night like this we are to look for the dawn of a better day in the regions of the Levant? If there is little to commend in the Turkish Government symbolised by the Mosque at Trebizond, was the rule of Alexios III., the feeble and ostentatious patron of Sumelas, a whit better? nay, was it not the more sterile, the more corrupt, the more worthless of the two? Whatever may be the handwriting on the wall of the Ottoman palace, the 'Tekel' of 'Greek' rule and 'Greek' mind is unmistakably inscribed on the memorials of the Byzantine past; nor do the wonder-working pictures and rocking cradles of Mariamana tend to reverse, rather they deepen and confirm the sentence.

It is now mid-day; and before we redescend into the valley, thence to attempt some sketch of the picturesque building from the opposite side, we stand a few minutes in the gallery, and take a last look at the lovely scene before us, now bathed in the silent splendour of a southern noon. Far aloft stretch the bare snow-streaked heights where passes the summer track to Beyboort and Erzeroom; below the dense tree-tops are pierced here and there by fantastic rock pinnacles, splinters detached centuries ago from the precipice on either side; ten of these grey islets in the leafy depth are crowned by as many little white chapels; they also belong to the Mariamana jurisdiction, and in each of them, when the appropriate anniversary comes round, the festival of its peculiar saint, Eugenius, John, or some one else of the ten spiritual guardians of Trebizond, is duly celebrated by the Basilian monks of Sumelas. Far beneath rushes and foams the Alpine torrent, the waters of which we have thus traced backwards from their marshy exit at Trebizond almost to their fountain-head.

The monks with undiminished hospitality press us to stay; and when we insist on the necessity of setting out, lest night should overtake us before regaining Jevezlik, are warm in their farewell. 'You will make your English friends acquainted with us and our convent,' says, with an accent of request, the old monk who has been our chief attendant; we promise; and thus we keep our word.

VIII.

THE ABKHASIAN INSURRECTION.

'Like doth quit like, and measure still for measure.'

(PUBLISHED IN THE 'CORNHILL,' SEPTEMBER, 1867.)

NOTICE.

THE events recorded in this Essay had some degree of publicity at the time, and were considerably distorted and misrepresented in European periodicals. Circumstances rendered me, shortly after, a resident in Abkhasia itself, and thus gave me special facilities for investigation of what had happened. In the facts here narrated, we have a fair sample of one of those many outpost struggles, in which Christian Russia has been pitted against semi-barbarous Caucasian Islam; the ultimate result has been much the same in every instance. It may interest the reader to know, that in the following year between twenty and thirty thousand of the Mahometan remnant in the West Caucasus provinces emigrated *into* Turkey, and settled there, thus making the loss of Russia the gain of her neighbour.

'So'OUK-SOO,' or 'Cool Waters,' is one of the loveliest spots in the lovely province of Abkhasia. Lying only a few miles inland from the eastern Black Sea shore, and on the first rise of the wooded Caucasus, a day's ride north of the town and harbour of Soukhoum-Kalé, it was from old times a favourite summer residence of the chiefs of Abkhasia; their winter was more often

passed at Drand or Otchemchiri, further down the coast.

But in addition to its natural beauty and residential importance, this locality has acquired a special title to almost European interest since August, 1866, when it became the scene and starting-point of an outbreak —disguised in distorted newspaper accounts under fictions of brigandage, slave-driving, and the like, but which was in fact nothing else than an Eastern re-enactment of events familiar, since 1830, to Warsaw and the Western Provinces of the Russian Empire.

During the month of November, 1866, while the memories of the Abkhasian insurrection were still recent, and the lingering autumn of the Caucasus yet permitted horse-travelling (for in winter these mountains become totally impassable), we—that is, myself with a Mingrelian servant and guide—arrived at So'ouk-Soo, after a ten hours' ride from Soukhoum-Kalé, through bush and forest, stream and mire. Roads are luxuries often announced in programme, sometimes talked of, but never seen in these provinces. It was already dark when, after much clambering and slipping, we found ourselves on a sort of plateau, entangled in a labyrinth of hedges, where scattered lights glimmered among the brushwood, and dogs barking in all directions gave us to know that we had reached So'ouk-Soo. Like most other Abkhasian villages, its houses are neither ranged in streets nor grouped in blocks, but scattered as at random, each in a separate enclosure. The houses themselves are one-storied and of wood, sometimes mere huts of wattle and clay; the enclosures are of cut stakes, planted and interwoven latticewise; the spaces between these hedgerows serve for the passage of countless goats and oxen that pass the night within their master's precincts, and go out to pasture during the day. Old

forest-trees, fresh underwood, bramble, and grass grow everywhere, regardless of the houses, which are often in a manner lost among them; one is at times right in the middle of a village before one has even an idea of having approached it.

After much hallooing and much answering in sibilants and gutturals,—really the Abkhasian alphabet seems to contain nothing else,—we prevailed on some peasants to get up and guide us through the darkness to the house of the 'Natchalnick,' or Governor of the district. Here we passed the remainder of the night with his Excellency, a Georgian by birth, and, like every one else of these ilks, who is not of serfish origin, a prince by title, but now an officer in the Russian army, into which the 'natives,' fond as negroes of gay dress and glitter, are readily attracted by lace and epaulettes. Many of the 'princes' of the land—elsewhere chiefs or sheykhs at most—have, on this motive, with the additional hope of a decoration, assumed the badges of Russian military service, wherein they easily obtain subordinate posts; and there aid as spies or as tools in disarming the constantly recurring discontent of their countrymen, till some day or other their own personal discontent breaks out, and then the tool, no longer serviceable, is broken and thrown aside, to be replaced, where wanted, by another.

Early next morning, while the dew glittered on the rank grass, and the bright sun shone slant through the yet leafy trees, we rode, accompanied by the 'Natchalnick' and his whole suite of Georgians and Mingrelians in Cossack dress, to visit the 'Meidan' of So'ouk-Soo, where the first shot of insurrection had been fired four months before.

A 'Meidan,' or 'open ground,' is—all know who have visited the East—the necessary adjunct of every

town or village honoured by a chieftain's residence. It serves for town-hall, for park, for parade-ground, for scene of all public gathering, display, business, or amusement. On it is invariably situated the chief's or governor's abode; a mosque, if the land be Mahometan, a church, if Christian, is never wanting; the main street or artery of the locality terminates here. Lastly, it is seldom devoid of a few large trees, the shade of loiterers.

The Meidan of So'ouk-Soo offers all these characteristic features, but offers them after a manner indicating the events it has witnessed, and the causes or consequences of those events. It is an open book, legibly written by the Nemesis of history, 'the measure for measure,' the reciprocated revenges of national follies and national crimes.

'Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,' says Byron, contrasting the quiet prolonged existence of great nature with the short and turbulent period of human life. Much the same feeling comes over one at So'ouk-Soo. The green grassy plot dotted with noble trees—beech, elm, and oak; around, the swelling uplands, between which the 'cool waters' of the torrent —whence the name of the place—rush sparkling down to the blue sea; beyond, the huge Caucasian mountain-chain, here seen in all its central magnificence of dark forest below and white fantastic peaks above, in unearthly wildness of outline beyond the dreams of the most enthusiastic pre-Raphaelite landscape-painter; above, the ever-varying sky; around, the fresh hill-breeze: the chiefs of Abkhasia could not have found in all their domains a fairer, a more life-giving place for their residence. But another story is told by the traces of a ruined mosque on one side of the Meidan, and near it some neglected tombs bearing on the carved posts—

which here replace monumental stones—the Mahometan symbolic turban. Close by are four wooden crosses, sunk and awry, freshly planted in the still loose mould of as many recent graves. Next, the blackened walls and empty windows of a large burnt house surrounded by a broken stone-wall. Further on, a second fire-ruin, amid the trees and shrubs of a yet thickly-growing garden. Opposite, on the other side of the Meidan, and alone intact and entire, as though triumphing over the ruin it has in no small measure caused, stands a church—a small building of the semi-Byzantine style usual in Russian and Georgian ecclesiastical architecture hereabouts. Close by is a large house, symmetrically built, with a porch of Greek marble and other signs of former display. But all within has been gutted and burnt: the long range of stone windows opens into emptiness, the roof has fallen in, and the marble columns are stained and split with fire. Here, too, in the same strange contrast of life and death, a beautiful garden, where the mixture of cypress and roses, of flowering trees and deep leafy shrubbery, betokens Turkish taste, forms a sideground and a background to the dismantled dwelling. Some elms and a few Cossack-tenanted huts complete the outer circle of the Meidan.

Each one of these objects has a history, each one is a foot-print in the march of the Caucasian Nemesis, each one a record of her triumph and of her justice.

The ruined mosque and turban-crowned tomb-posts recall the time when Mahometanism and submission to the great centre of orthodox Islam, Constantinople, was the official condition of Abkhasia. This passed into Russian rule and Christian lordship; and the Nemesis of this phase is marked by the wooden crosses under which lie the mutilated corpses of Colonel Cognard, Russian Governor-General of Abkhasia, of Ismailoff,

Russian 'Natchalnick' of So'ouk-Soo, of Cheripoff, the Tiflis Commissioner, and of Colonel Cognard's aide-de-camp: they perished in the outbreak of August. The large burnt house close by was the abode of Alexander Shervashiji, brother of the last native chief of Abkhasia. Less than half a century since the family bartered national independence and Islam against Russian popes and epaulettes. Their Nemesis has come too. In this very house Cognard and his suite were slaughtered. The ruin close by was once the residence of the ill-famed 'Natchalnick' Ismailoff; it recalls the special vengeance of licentious tyranny—how, we shall see afterwards. The church, alone yet intact, is of old date and of Georgian construction—once abandoned, then revived and repaired by the regenade Shervashijis, its Nemesis is now in its lonely silence. The ruin of hewn stone, Turkish in style, was the palace of Michael Shervashiji, the last native-born ruler of the province. Russian in uniform, Abkhasian at heart, true to his own interests, false to those of others, he constructed this palace on his return from a visit to the west: it inaugurated the beginning of a late return to the old Ottoman alliance; but with the general fate of return movements—especially when undertaken after their time—it inaugurated also his own ruin and that of his nation. The Cossack and Abkhasian huts further on were yet tenanted in November last: they are now empty.

We alighted, visited these strange memorials one by one, heard the story of each, remounted our horses, galloped up and down the springy turf of the Meidan, and then plunged into the deep wooded ravine north-east, and left the scene of inconstancy, violence, and blood, on our way to the districts of Bzibb and northern Abkhasia.

But our readers must halt a little longer on the Meidan if they desire to understand the full import of the tragedy of which we have just seen the stage decorations.

Of the early history of the Abkhasian race little is known, and little was probably to be known. More than two thousand years since we find them, in Greek records, inhabiting the narrow strip between the mountains and the sea, along the central eastern coast of the Euxine, precisely where later records and the maps of our own day place them. But whence these seeming autochthons arrived, what was the cradle of their infant race, to which of the great 'earth-families,' in German phrase, this little tribe, the highest number of which can never have much exceeded a hundred thousand, belonged, are questions on which the past and the present are alike silent. Tall stature, fair complexion, light eyes, auburn hair, and a great love for active and athletic sport, might seem to assign them a Northern origin; but an Oriental regularity of feature, and a language which, though it bears no discoverable affinity to any known dialect, has yet the Semitic post-fixes, and in guttural richness distances the purest Arabic or Hebrew, would appear to claim for them a different relationship. Their character, too, brave, enterprising, and commercial in its way, has yet very generally a certain mixture of childish cunning, and a total deficiency of organising power, that cement of nations, which removes them from European and even from Turkish resemblance, while it recalls the so-called Semitic of south-western Asia. But no tradition on their part lays claim to the solution of their mystery, and records are wanting among a people who have never committed their vocal sounds to writing; they know that they are Abkhasians, and nothing more.

Pagans, like all early nations, they received a slight whitewash of Christianity at times from the Byzantine Empire; at times from their Georgian neighbours; till at last the downfall of Trebizond and the extension of the Ottoman power on their frontier by sea and by land rendered them what they have still mostly remained, Mahometans. Divided from time immemorial into five main tribes, each with its clannish subdivisions, the un-euphonic names of which we pass over out of sheer compassion to printers and readers, they first, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, received a common master in the person of Tahmuras-khan, a Persian by birth, native of Sherwan, whence the family name of Sherwajee, modified into Shervashiji, but claiming descent from the ancient kings of Iran. Having in the year 1625 lent considerable aid to the Turks in their interminable contest with the Persians for the mastery of Georgia, he was by them confirmed in the government of Abkhasia; his residence was at Soukhoum, whence for a while his descendants, still known among the Turks by the by-name of 'Kizil-Bash,' synonymous with 'Persian,' ruled the entire province. But when somewhat later Soukhoum became the abode of an Ottoman Pasha, the Shervashijis transferred their quarters to So'ouk-Soo, which henceforth became in a manner the capital of Abkhasia.

The treaty of Adrianople, in 1829, handed over the Western Caucasian coast to Russian rule; and the ruling Shervashiji (Hamood Beg), then in the prime of life, showed himself a devoted worshipper of the rising,—if not sun,—Aurora Borealis of Petersburg. Quitting his ancestral religion and name, he was baptized into Russian Christianity under the title of Michael Beg, received a high rank in the Russian army, and, head and hand, did the work of his new masters.

For all the long years that the Circassian struggle lasted, through the months wasted by Omar Pasha in Mingrelia, and during all the squandered and lost opportunity—squandered in 1855, lost in 1856—of restoring and of securing the freedom of the Caucasus, perhaps of all Central Asia, from the yoke to which more and more necks must daily bow, Michael Shervashiji was by turns the main implement of Russian diplomacy in disuniting Western Caucasus from the common cause, and the military executioner to whom was entrusted the subdual, and even extermination, of his more patriotic neighbours. With the short-sighted acuteness common among Easterns he saw only his own present advantage, and took no heed that while helping to destroy his petty though hereditary rivals he was, in the Russian point of view, cutting away the last props of his own rule. Meanwhile his every request was granted, every privilege confirmed. Russian garrisons were indeed at Soukhoum-Kalé, at Gagri, at other stations of the coast; but inland Michael Shervashiji was sole lord and master, and not even a Russian officer could venture a 'werst' up the interior without his permission and escort.

All this was very well for a time; Shamyl was still unconquered, and Michael Shervashiji was too valuable an ally for the Russians not to be humoured—Shakespeare might have said 'fooled'—to the top of his bent, even at some temporary sacrifice of Russian uniformization and monopoly. But at last the circle of hunters narrowed round the mountain deer at bay in the heights of Gunib, and eyes less keen than Michael's could foresee near at hand the moment when the last independence of the Caucasus would have ceased to be. *Tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet*, can be thought in Abkhasian no less than expressed in Latin; and Michael

grew uneasy at the prospect of a boundless horizon of Russian friends. His health suddenly but opportunely failed, a change of air,—of water, Eastern M.D.'s would say,—became necessary; a journey to Europe was recommended; a passport was taken, rather than granted; and the great Shervashiji, like many other princes, went to try the waters.

That the said waters should in a few months have restored his health was quite natural; it was, however, somewhat singular that they should at the same time have had an Osmanlizing effect on his own constitution. Some say they were the waters of the Bosporus that acted on him thus; others attribute it to a reaction produced by the waters of the Volga, which, in a visit to Moscow, he drank near their source about this very time. Certainly on his return strange and anti-Muscovite symptoms appeared. His new residence at So'ouk-Soo, the ancestral seat of his independence, rose on a Turkish model; his manners, his speech, grew less Russian. It was noticed, too, that on entering church he no longer uncovered his head, a decided hint, said the Russians, that church and mosque were for him on much the same footing. Perhaps the Russians were not far wrong.

Then came 1864, the great Circassian emigration—i.e. the expulsion of well nigh a million of starving and plundered wretches from their country, for the crime of having defended that country against strangers—was accomplished; in Eastern phrase, the Abkhasian 'back was cut,' and now came their turn to receive the recompense of their fidelity to Russia and their infidelity to their native Caucasus. The first and main tool of Tiflis had been Michael Shervashiji; he was accordingly the first to receive his stipend.

Too late aware what that stipend was likely to be,

he had retired into an out-of-the-way country residence some hours to the interior, behind Otchemchiri. Here, in November, 1864, the Russian 'pay-day' found him, in the shape of a detachment of soldiers sent by his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael to invite and escort him to the viceregal presence at Tiflis. Whether thinking that resistance would only make matters worse, or reckoning on the deceptive chances of what is called 'an appeal to generosity,' the Beg at once gave himself up to the troops. By them he was forthwith conducted, not to Tiflis, but to the coast, where lay the ship appointed to convey him to Kertch, whence began his destined journey to Russia and Siberia. A traitor, he met a traitor's recompense, and that, as was most fitting, at the hands of those in whose behalf his life had been for thirty-five years one prolonged treason to his country. Yet that country wept him at his departure—he was their born prince, after all, and no stranger—and they wept him still more when the news of his death—the ready consequence of exile at an advanced age into the uncongenial Siberian climate and Siberian treatment, but by popular rumour attributed to Russian poison—reached them in the spring of 1866. His corpse was brought back to his native mountains, and he was buried amid the tears and wailings of his Abkhasian subjects.

They had, indeed, already other cause for their wailings. Hardly had their last prince ceased to live, than measures were taken by the viceregal Government for the nominal demarcation, the real confiscation, of the lands of the Abkhasian nobility; while the peasants, for their part, found the little finger of Russian incorporization heavier than all the loins of all the Shervashijis. Russian custom-houses formed a cordon along the coast; Russian Cossacks and Natchalnicks were

posted everywhere up the country; the whole province was placed under Russian law and military administration; Abkhasian rights, Abkhasian customs and precedents were henceforth abolished. More still, their religion, the great supplement of nationality in the East—because in its Eastern form it embodies whatever makes a nation, its political and social, its public and private being—was now menaced. Russian chronologists discovered that the Abkhasians had once been Christians, whence the Tiflis Government drew the self-evident conclusion that they had no right to be at present Mahometans. An orthodox bishop or archbishop, I forget which, of Abkhasia, appeared on the scene, and the work, or rather the attempt at proselytism was diligently pushed forward by enticement and intimidation under hierarchical auspices. Lastly, a census of the population,—a process which ever since David numbered the children of Israel and brought on them the plague in consequence, has been in ill-odour in the East,—was ordered.

Of the Shervashiji family many remained. Michael's own brother, Alexander, still resided, though without authority, at So'ouk-Soo; George, Michael's eldest son, now a Russian officer, and the Grand Duke's aide-de-camp, had returned from Petersburg, where no amount of champagne and cards had been spared to make him a genuine Russian; epaulettes and aigrettes would, it was to be hoped, retain him such. But bred in the bone will not out of the flesh, and he was still a Shervashiji, nor had he forgotten the rights of heir-apparent. Another and a powerful branch of the same family, the relatives of Said Beg Shervashiji of Kelasoor, a Mahometan, and who had died poisoned, it was said, by his Christian kinsman and rival, Michael, were also in the country, and seemed inclined to forget family quarrels in the

common cause. Besides these were two other 'houses' of special note, the Marshians and the Ma'ans. The former had, like the Shervashijis, been in general subservient to Russia—some had even apostatized from Islam; but their chief, Shereem Beg a Mahometan, had married Michael Shervashiji's sister, and state marriages in the East are productive of other results than mere non-interventions and children. The other family, the Ma'ans, staunch Islam, had for some time previous broken off Russian connection: one of them, Mustapha Agha, had even taken service in the Ottoman army. Their head, Hasan Ma'an, had quitted his Abkhasian abode at Bambora, half way between Soukhoum and So'ouk-Soo, for the Turkish territory of Trebizond, where he lived within call, but without grasp.

Discontent was general and leaders were not wanting; yet just and judicious measures on the part of the Russians might have smoothed all down; but their Nemesis and that of Abkhasia had decreed that such measures should not be taken—the exact reverse.

In the month of July, 1866, a commission headed by the civilian Cheripoff had come from Tiflis to complete the survey and estimate of the lands, those of the Shervashijis in particular. This commission had taken up its head-quarters at So'ouk-Soo along with the local military Governor, Ismailoff, and a body of Cossacks about two hundred strong. Some of these last were stationed at the coast village of Gouda'outa, a few miles distant. To So'ouk-Soo now flocked all the discontented chiefs, and of course their followers; for no Abkhasian noble can stir a foot out of doors without a 'tail' of at least thirty, each with his long slender-stocked gun, his goat-hair cloak, his pointed head-dress, and, for the rest, a knife at his girdle, and more tears than cloth in his tight grey trousers and large cartridge-breasted coat.

Some mezzotints in *Hughes' Albanian Travels,* old edition, two volumes quarto, where Suliotes, Albanians, and the like are to be seen clambering over rocks, gun on shoulder, in the evident intention of shooting somebody, give a tolerable idea of these fellows, only they are more ragged than the heroes of the said mezzotints, also less ferocious. The commission lodged in the houses about the Meidan; the Abkhasians—for it was summer—camped on the Meidan itself, filling it with guns and gutturals.

Much parleying took place. The Abkhasians were highly excited—why, we have already seen; the Russians, not yet aware with whom they had to deal, were insolent and overbearing, The fire of contest was, unavowedly but certainly, fanned by many of the Abkhasian chiefs, not unwilling to venture all where they saw that if they ventured nothing they must lose all. Alexander Shervashiji was there in his own house on the Meidan; his nephew George had arrived from Tiflis: the Russian decorations on his breast lay over a heart no less anti-Russian than his uncle's and his father's—so at least said the Russians: perhaps it suited them to incriminate the last influential representatives of the Shervashiji family. There too were many of the Marshians: was Shereem Beg amongst them? Some said, some denied. 'Se non è vero è ben trovato,' was the Russian conclusion. But more active than any, more avowedly at the head of what now daily approached nearer to revolt, were the two Ma'an brothers, Mustapha and Temshook—the former lately returned from Turkey—both men of some talent and of much daring.

Meanwhile news of all this was brought to Colonel Cognard, the Russian Governor-General of Abkhasia, and then resident at Soukhoum-Kalé. A violent, imperious man, full of contempt for all 'natives,' and

like many of foreign origin, more Russian than the Russians themselves, he imagined that his presence at So'ouk-Soo would at once suffice to quell the rising storm and awe the discontented into submission. Accordingly, on the first week of August, he arrived on the scene, and lodged in the great house of Alexander Shervashiji—whither, in consequence, the whole attention of either party, Russian and Abkhasian, was now directed.

Throughout the whole of this affair, it is curious to observe how the Russians, men of no great sensibility themselves, ignored the sensibilities of others, and seemed to think that whatever the injury, whatever the wrong, inflicted by a Russian Government, it ought to arouse in its victims no other feeling than resignation at most. Here in Abkhasia the hereditary ruler of the country had, after life-long services, in time of profound tranquillity, with nothing proved or even distinctly charged against him, been suddenly dragged into exile and premature death; his family, those of all the Abkhasian nobility, had been deprived of their rights, and threatened with the deprivation of their property; ancestral customs, law, religion, national existence,—for even Abkhasians lay claim to all these,—had been brought to the verge of Russian absorption into not-being; and all the while Cognard with his friends could not imagine the existence of any Abkhasian discontent that would not at once be appeased, be changed into enthusiastic, into Pan-slavistic loyalty, by the appearance of that '*deus ex machinâ*,' a Russian Governor-General. *Vide* Warsaw *passim*.

Nemesis willed it otherwise. Cognard's demeanour was brutal, his every word an insult. The nobles presented their griefs; he refused to recognize them as nobles. The peasants clamoured; he informed

them that they were not Abkhasians but Russians. In vain Alexander Shervashiji and the Marshians, sensible and moderate men the most, expostulated and represented that the moment was not one for additional irritation; Cognard was deaf to expostulation and advice; his fate was on him. It did not delay. On the 8th of August a deputation composed of the principal Abkhasian nobility laid before him a sort of Oriental ultimatum in the form of an address; the Russian Governor-General answered it by kicking address and nobles out of doors. It was noon: a cry of vengeance and slaughter arose from the armed multitude on the Meidan.

The assault began on the Cossacks stationed about the house; they were no less unprepared than their masters, and could offer but little resistance. Already the first shots had been fired and blood had flowed when Cognard sent out George Shervashiji to appease those who should by right have been his subjects—whose rebellion was, in fact, for his own father's sake. That he never returned is certain. By his own account, which was confirmed on most hands, he did his best to quiet the insurgents, but unsuccessfully. They forced him aside, said he, and detained him at a distance while the outbreak went on. The Russians ascribed to him direct participation in what followed; the reasons for such imputation are palpable, the fact itself improbable.

In a few minutes the Cossacks before the gate were overpowered and slaughtered; the Abkhasians burst into the house. Its owner, Alexander Shervashiji, met them on the inner threshold, and implored them to respect the sanctity of their chief's hearth. But that moment had gone by, and the old man was laid hold of by his countrymen and led away—respectfully

indeed, but in a manner to preclude resistance—while the massacre begun without doors continued within. Whatever was Russian perished: the luckless Commissioner from Tiflis first; Cognard's aide-de-camp and his immediate suite were cut down; but the main search of the insurgents was after Cognard himself. A Russian picture, largely copied and circulated, represents him seated composedly in his chair, unblenched in feature, unmoved in limb, confronting his assailants. Pity that so artistic a group should have existed only in the artist's own imagination. The Colonel had not, indeed, made good his retreat, but he had done his best thereto by creeping up the large fireplace, of Abkhasian fashion, in the principal room. Unfortunately for him his boots protruded downwards into the open space; and by these the insurgents seized him, dragged him out to the mid apartment, and there despatched him. His colleague, Ismailoff, had a worse fate. Specially obnoxious to the inhabitants of So'ouk-Soo for the impudence of his profligacy, he was first mutilated and then hewn piecemeal, limb by limb. It is said that the dogs were already eating morsels of his flesh before life had left his body. Such atrocities are not uncommon in the East where female honour is concerned, rare else. At So'ouk-Soo, Ismailoff was the only instance.

All was now in the hands of the insurgents, who sacked and burnt the houses of Russian tenants, killing all they found. Only twenty Cossacks escaped, and these owed their lives to the humane exertions of the wife of Alexander Shervashiji, who gave them refuge in her own apartments, and kept them there safe till the massacre was over. A few Georgians and Mingrelians, a Pole too, though wearing the Russian uniform, were also spared. 'You are not Russians, our quarrel is

not with you,' said the Abkhasians, as they took the men's arms, and sent them off uninjured to Soukhoum.

On the same afternoon the insurgents attacked the nearest Russian post, that of the Cossacks stationed on coast-guard at Gouda'outa. Here, too, the assailants were successful, the Russians were killed to a man, and their abode was burnt. The Nemesis of Abkhasia had completed another stage of her work.

'To Soukhoum' was now the cry; and the whole mass of armed men, now about three thousand in number, were in movement southwards along the coast, through thickets and by-paths, to the Russian stronghold. Next morning, from two to three hundred had already crossed the Gumista, a broad mountain torrent north of Soukhoum, and were before, or rather behind the town.

A small crescent of low one-storied houses, mostly wood, Soukhoum-Kalé lies at the bottom of a deep bay with a southerly aspect. At its western extremity is the Old Fort, ascribed to the Genovese, but more probably of Turkish date, whence Soukhoum derives the adjunct of 'Kela'at,' or 'Castle' (Kalé is erroneous, but we will retain it for custom's sake), a square building, with thick walls of rough masonry and a few flanking bastions; within is room for a mustered regiment or more. From the town crescent some straight lines, indications of roads, run perpendicularly back across the plashy ground for about a quarter of a mile to the mountains; along these lines are ranged other small wooden houses, mostly tenanted by Russian officers. The garrison-camp, situated on the most unhealthy site of this unhealthy marsh, lies east. Behind is a table-land, whereon in August last there still stood the barracks of a Russian outpost, a hospital, a public vapour-bath, and a few houses.

The coast strip is low and swampy, a nest of more fevers than there are men to catch them; the mountains behind, thickly wooded and fern-clad between the trees, are fairly healthy.

At the moment of the first Abkhasian onset, the 9th of August, three Russian vessels—a transport, a corvette, and a schooner, all three belonging to the long-shore fleet of Nicolaieff—were lying in the harbour. But the number of men in the camp was small, falling under a thousand, and of these not above one-half were fit for duty.

Had the Abkhasians been able at once to bring their whole force to bear on Soukhoum-Kalé, town and fort would probably have alike fallen into their hands. At the first approach of the enemy, the Russian garrison had abandoned the plateau and all the upper part of the town, confining themselves to the defensive in the lines along the shore, where they were in a measure covered by the fire of the ships, and in the Fort itself. Meanwhile all the 'mixed multitude' of Soukhoum—small Greek and Armenian shop-keepers, Mingrelian and Georgian camp-followers, a few Jews and the like—had fled for refuge, some into the Fort, some on board the vessels in the harbour. But their best auxiliary on this occasion was a violent rain-storm, which at this very moment burst over the mountains, and in a few hours so swelled the Gumista torrent that the main body of Abkhasians mustered behind it were for the whole of the ensuing day unable to cross over to the help of their comrades, the assailants of Soukhoum.

These last had already occupied the plateau, burnt whatever was on it, and, descending into the plain, plundered and set fire to the dwellings of several Russian officers close below. They then advanced some way down the central street, ostentatiously called the

'Boulevard' in honour of some little trees planted along it. But here they were checked by the fire of the Russian vessels, and by the few troops whom their officers could persuade to remain without the fort in the lower part of the town.

Two days, two anxious days, matters remained on this footing. But news had been despatched to Poti, and on the third morning arrived a battalion from that place, just as the main body of the Abkhasians, headed by the two sons of Hasan Ma'an, Mustapha and Temshook, crossed the now diminished Gumista and entered Soukhoum.

Fighting now began in good earnest. The numbers on either side were pretty fairly matched, but the Abkhasians, though inferior in arms, were superior in courage; and it required all the exertions of a Polish colonel and of two Greek officers to keep the Russian soldiers from even then abandoning the open ground. However, next morning brought the Russians fresh reinforcements; and being by this time fully double the force of their ill-armed, undisciplined enemy, they ventured on becoming assailants in their turn. By the end of the fifth day the insurgents had dispersed amid the woods. The Russian loss at Soukhoum-Kalé was reckoned at sixty or seventy men, that of the Abkhasians at somewhat less; but as they carried their dead and wounded away with them, the exact number has never been known. During the short period of their armed presence at Soukhoum they had killed no one except in fair fight, burnt or plundered no houses except Russian, committed no outrage, injured no neutral. Only the Botanical Garden, a pretty copse of exotic trees, the creation of Prince Woronzoff, and on this occasion the scene of some hard fighting, was much wasted, and a Polish chapel was burnt. Public rumour ascribed both

these acts of needless destruction, the first probably, the latter certainly, to the Russian soldiery themselves.

The rest of the story is soon told. Accompanied by a large body of troops, the Russian Governor-General of the Western Caucasus went to So'ouk-Soo. He met with no resistance. Cognard and his fellow-victims were buried—we have seen their graves—and the house of Alexander Shervashiji, that in which Cognard had perished, with the palace of the Prince Michael, was gutted and burnt by a late act of Russian vindictiveness. The Nemesis of Abkhasia added these further trophies to her triumph at So'ouk-Soo.

Thus it was in November last. A few more months have passed, and that triumph is already complete. After entire submission, and granted pardon, the remnant of the old Abkhasian nation—first their chiefs and then the people—have at last, in time of full peace and quiet, been driven from the mountains and coast where Greek, Roman, Persian, and Turkish domination had left them unmolested for more than two thousand years, to seek under the more tolerant rule of the Ottoman Sultan a freedom which Russia often claims without her own limits, always denies within them. The Meidan of So'ouk-Soo is now empty. Russians and Abkhasians, Shervashijis and Cossacks, native and foreigner, have alike disappeared, and nothing remains but the fast crumbling memorials of a sad history of national folly rewarded by oppression, oppression by violence, violence by desolation.

IX.

THE POET 'OMAR.

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NOTICE.

This Essay, as well as the following, or Tenth, is here inserted in order to illustrate the Arab mind and character taken wholly, or in great measure, apart from the reaction produced by the Mahometan system which originated amidst them. No code or religion can be correctly estimated without a knowledge of the life and thought of which it was an outgrowth or development; later ages retain the letter, but the spirit and meaning are only to be gathered from the contemporary surroundings of its first origin. In the life and writings of the poet 'Omar, we see the civilization and refinement, in those of the brigand Ta'abbet-Shurran and his companions, the barbarous energy by both of which Islam was cradled, and to which the Book owed much of its inspiration, and the Sword of its conquests.

THE princes of Benoo-Omeyyah, who during ninety-four years (A.D. 661–755) ruled from their throne at Damascus over the already immense extent of the Mohammedan world, enjoyed a title to sovereignty peculiarly their own; one denied to all Caliphs and Sultans of later date; whether the orthodox monarchs of Bagdad and Constantinople, or the schismatical Imams of Cairo or Teheran; that, namely, of being governors genuinely and unreservedly co-national with

the main body of those they governed, not in descent only, but also in character, manners, and system.

Even the four elective Caliphs, Mohammed's immediate successors, though themselves essentially Arab, were yet too much cramped, 'Alee in particular, by excessive zeal and righteousness overmuch, to be a faithful expression of the real national type. Deeply imbued though Arabs are, more so indeed than the generality of men, with reverence for the eternal law that, as one of our own poets has unconsciously rendered an every-day Arab phrase, 'On every side our being rings,' few people are less inclined than they to multiply complicated observances, and to make of religion and its ceremonies the staple of practical life. Hence it came that Aboo-Bekr, 'Omar, 'Othmán, and 'Alee, however congenial, the first three at any rate, to the special phase of mind through which their countrymen were then passing, which was in fact the inflammatory or fever stage of Islamitic inoculation, were yet even then, in common parlance, almost too much for them: 'Alee was so decidedly. Indeed, before the initial half-century was over, the Kharajee or free-thinking reaction of avowed infidelity and license had already set in; and the dagger of Ebn-Muljem did but give effect to the general desire of freedom from a yoke which for some years past the Arabs had felt and declared that neither they nor their children were able to bear.

But in the splendid, jovial, adventure-loving, devil-may-care sons of Omeyyah, 'very heathens in the carnal part,' however sad, good Mohammedans at heart they may have been, and indeed unquestionably were, the Arabs had not merely their own flesh and blood, but, what was much more, their own heart and soul, to reign over them; and it was accordingly during the

period of their supremacy that the Arab 'geist,' to plagiarise the convenient German word, breathed freest and obtained its fullest expansion. Hence we may not inaptly, before approaching the Damascene Court itself, and the principal figures that gave it splendour and importance, take a general survey of the social conditions around in town or country, as illustrated by those individual sketches of which the records of the age furnish us with abundant choice.

The almost pre-historic winter, the early and the mid-spring of Arab civilisation had already passed away; it was now summer, the time of brightest bloom and of most abundant vigour. Simple in their innate restlessness, and restless in their innate simplicity, as Arabs still were, the young manhood of the nation imparted itself to every individual, and heightened the aims of life, while giving them at the same time a depth and a breadth unknown before. War, counsel, eloquence; these had always formed the triple excellence that Arabia claimed for her sons as their noblest praise; and it was now, under the star of Benoo-Omeyyah, that she fully realised her own ideal, and gave simultaneous birth to her greatest warriors, her most skilful statesmen, and her choicest poets. The change which had come over the spirit of these last is in itself a remarkable illustration of profoundly modified social conditions throughout the entire peninsula.

Poverty of means, isolation of circumstance, and insecurity of life, had, during the long ante-Islamitic period, cramped the energy, narrowed the ideas, and marred the taste of almost all, indeed in some degree of all Arab poets. The circle they moved in was rough, barren, and contracted; their genius dwarfed itself into proportion with the limits which it could not

overpass. The high rank and noble birth of the pre-Islamitic 'Amroo-ben-Kelthoom and 'Amroo-l-Keys had not exempted them from ever-recurring personal dangers and privations on the road and in the field; while the vigorous spirit of Shanfara', Ta'abbeṭ-Shurran, and their like, was distorted by the physical misery and the savage loneliness to which their writings bear such frequent witness. All this had now passed away. Union had given security, conquest riches; while intercourse and Islam had developed the intellect of the nation. Two entirely new classes of society henceforth came into existence—the men of pleasure, and the men of literature: the former heirs of a wealth they cared rather to enjoy than to increase; the latter seekers after wealth, fame, and name, but by intellectual, not by physical distinction. Love and song tissued the career of the former; poetry and eloquence, but chiefly poetry, were the business of the latter. Meanwhile a select few, the spoilt children of destiny, the Mirandolas or Byrons of their land and day, combined the advantages of birth and fortune with those of genius. Foremost among these stands the nobleman, the warrior, the libertine, but above all the poet—the Don Juan of Mecca, the Ovid of Arabia and the East—'Omar the Mogheeree, the grandson of Aboo-Rabee'ah.

He, by universal award, placed on the head of his kinship, the great Ḳoreysh clan, the only garland that had heretofore been wanting there. In every respect but one, Ḳoreysh had long occupied the first place, not in the Ḥejaz only, but throughout the whole extent of the Arabian Empire. The elevation of their tribesmen, the sons of Omeyyah, to the Caliphate, had added the temporal supremacy to the spiritual leadership already bequeathed to them in another branch of their

family by the great Prophet: Khalid, the sword of Islam, 'Amroo, the conqueror and legislator of Egypt, and Moosa, the terror of Spain, had each in his turn contributed to the common heirloom of glory; and from the frontiers of India to the sea of Cadiz their will was obeyed by subject millions to whose fathers the very names of Ḥejaz and Ḳoreysh had been unknown. But in literature, and especially in the choicest form of literature, poetry, the foremost rank was still monopolised by names of other lineage, by the children of Nejd and Yemen. The Ḳoran, indeed, written as it was by a Ḳoreyshee of the Ḳoreyshees, was truly theirs; but its supernatural pretensions exempted this work, though first-rate of its kind, from literary praise, no less than from literary criticism. Besides, though hardly prose, at least in the ordinary acceptance of the word, the Ḳoran, unfettered by metre, and abounding in rhythm rather than rhyme, could not pass muster as poetry. It was reserved to the grandson of Aboo-Rabee'ah to achieve by his undoubted pre-eminence in that art the last crowning triumph for the hereditary princes of Mecca.

Five generations reckoned backwards united the branch of Ḳoreysh to which 'Omar belonged with that which had given origin to Mohammed himself, to Hashim, the ancestor of the Abbaside Caliphs, and to 'Abdesh-Shems, from whom descended Mua'wiah and his royal line. 'Omar's own great-grandfather, Mogheerah, had by his marriage with the noble and wealthy Reyṭah re-united two powerful subdivisions of Ḳoreysh descent, and had thereby become the founder of a clan which under the title of the Children of Mogheerah rapidly acquired a leading position both in peace and war. All were men of renown; but distinguished among them was Ḥodeyḳah Aboo-Rabee'ah,

the grandfather of 'Omar: his gigantic stature had earned him the surname of 'Two-spears,' equivalent in meaning to our own historical 'Longshanks;' and in the decisive battle of 'Okad, which, shortly before the birth of the Prophet, assured to Koreysh the exclusive guardianship of the Ka'abeh and the lasting signiory over their Nejdean rivals, Hodeykah was by all admitted to have won the first honours of the day.

But however great the reputation of Hodeykah, it was in a manner eclipsed by that of his son Bojeyr, the contemporary of Mohammed, by whom in person he was converted to Islam, and from whom he received on that occasion the new name of 'Abd-Allah, or 'Servant of God.' It was an ancient, almost immemorial, custom at Mecca, that the expenses—no inconsiderable ones—of decorating the Ka'abeh, or central shrine, for the yearly sacrificial solemnity, should be supported by its guardians, once the chieftains of Khozaa'h, now of Koreysh, who shared amongst themselves alike the cost and the honour. But the grandson of Mogheerah took on himself alone the entire responsibility of each alternate year, thus earning the title of 'El 'Idl,' or, 'the Equipoise,' as having shown himself equal singly to the entire clan in this their religious munificence. His wealth was indeed enormous; its sources were partly hereditary, through his grandmother Reytah (for the fatal law of testamentary partition, rendered obligatory by Mohammed, had not yet come into force), and were partly derived from the trade in metals, cloth, and spices—coffee was still unknown—with Abyssinia and Yemen, which he had in a manner monopolised, not by official privilege, but by superior skill and enterprise. A whole army of attendants, Abyssinian and Negro, followed in his train; and the greatest part of the

province of Tehamah, as the sea-coast south of Mecca to the neighbourhood of Mokha was then and is popularly still called, obeyed his bidding.

The offered assistance of 'Abd-Allah's negroid soldiery was declined by Mohammed, who may have prudently shunned the imputation of subjugating his own fair-skinned countrymen by the help of a dusky and alien race. But the democratic and yet absolutist tendency which led the Prophet systematically to depress, and even where possible to destroy, the existing aristocracy of the land had perhaps a greater share in the motives of this refusal. In Bojeyr, *alias* 'Abd-Allah the Mogheeree, we see the type of a class then recently originated yet already preponderant in Arabia, and which would have soon become supreme, but for the military despotism, based on popular equality, introduced by Mohammed : a system often tried, with slight and superficial modifications, from the days of Alexander and of the Cæsars down to those of Napoleon III., and invariably resulting in a brief and delusive splendour, followed by rapid and irretrievable decay. Had the aristocratic element survived, Arabia would probably have boasted less extensive conquest, but she would have made far greater and more durable acquisitions in progressive civilisation and real prosperity. But the Koranic equipartition of land and property, and the absorption of all effective and hereditary dignity in one only family, soon effaced the aristocracy, and with it, by a necessary consequence, the future of the nation. In the merchant-noble, 'Abd-Allah the Mogheeree, we see the fulness of a type that might have ensured alike advance and permanence ; with its disappearance scarce a century later begin rapid decadence and anarchical dissolution.

Two wives, one an Arab woman of Hadramout, a

province famed in all times for female beauty, the other a Christian and native of Abyssinia, gave to 'Abd-Allah two children, widely differing in character and in pursuits both from himself and from each other: the dusky half-blood Hirth, an austere Muslim, whose life was passed in the discharge of Government employments, some of the highest trust; and the gay, idle, talented poet, 'Omar.

This latter was born, so it chanced, on the very same day that the great Caliph, his namesake, was assassinated by the Persian slave Firooz. 'What Verity then set, and what Vanity rose!' said 'Omar's sarcastic half-censor, half-admirer, Ebn-'Abbas; who, like many others of the poet's contemporaries, manifested more annoyance at the scandals of his personal than admiration for the brilliancy of his literary career. 'Beware of permitting your children to read the compositions of 'Omar-Ebn-Abee-Rabee'ah,' said the austere Ebn-'Orwah, a great authority on such matters in his time, 'unless you wish to see them plunge headlong into vice.' And 'Abd-Allah Ebn-Musa'b, the high-born rival of the reigning Caliphs, having once on a time, while seated in his porch, noticed a maidservant of his about to enter the house with a book in her hand, called her to him to look at it; and on finding that the book in question was no other than a collection of 'Omar's poems, ordered her to return it unread without a moment's delay to those from whom she had borrowed it; adding, 'Are you mad, to bring a book like that into a house for girls to read? Do you not know that 'Omar's verses steal away the heart, and insinuate themselves into the very soul? Off with it!' Had the poet himself been by, he might not improbably have pardoned the censure for the compliment it implied.

His half-brother Ḥirth, the respectable, incorruptible, unimpeachable Governor of Baṣrah, had plenty of trouble on his brother's account; and many, though ineffectual, were the efforts he made to recall 'Omar from the evil of his ways. An instance recorded by the poet's best biographer, Aboo-l-Faraj, is too characteristic of the men and the times to be omitted.

One year, on the very high day of the great annual festival, when the pilgrims, assembled from all quarters of the Mohammedan world at Mecca, were engaged in the evening performance of their solemn traditionary rite, pacing seven times in prayer round the sacred Ka'abeh, Zeynab, a young girl of noble birth, happened to be present among the crowd of worshippers, from whom, however, she was easily to be distinguished by her surpassing beauty and the gay dresses of her numerous attendants. What next followed 'Omar may best recite after his own fashion, and in his own metre, which we have as far as possible preserved in the translation; though the rhyme, which if rendered would have necessitated too frequent divergence from the original style and imagery, has been omitted :—

Ah for the throes of a heart sorely wounded!
Ah for the eyes that have smit me with madness!
Gently she moved in the calmness of beauty,
Moved as the bough to the light breeze of morning.
Dazzled my eyes as they gazed, till before me
All was a mist and confusion of figures.
Ne'er had I sought her, and ne'er had she sought me;
Fated the love, and the hour, and the meeting.
There I beheld her as she and her damsels
Paced 'twixt the temple and outer enclosure;
Damsels the fairest, the loveliest, the gentlest,
Passing like slow-wending heifers at evening;
Ever surrounding with courtly observance
Her whom they honour, the peerless of women.

Then to a handmaid, the youngest, she whispered,
'"'Omar is near: let us mar his devotions.
Cross on his path that he needs may observe us;
Give him a signal, my sister, demurely.'
'Signals I gave, but he marked not or heeded,'
Answered the damsel, and hasted to meet me.
Ah for that night by the vale of the sand-hills!
Ah for the dawn when in silence we parted!
He who the morn may awake to her kisses
Drinks from the cup of the blessed in heaven.

The last four lines of this lyric seem, however, to have been written under the influence of poetical anticipation; for many weeks and even months passed without any closer intercourse than that of love-messages, and glances at a distance. Zeynab, with her father Moosa, and her two elder sisters, prolonged their visit at Mecca. 'Omar was now in the prime of youth and personal beauty, advantageously set off by rank, wealth, and idleness. No wonder that his reputation as a lady-killer was already pretty well established; and that Zeynab, young herself, and only too susceptible of attentions like 'Omar's, should have received from her alarmed relatives much prudent cautioning; with what result her lover thus gives us to judge:—

Still of me their converse: they at length beheld me
Scarce a furlong distant on my white-starred charger.
Said the eldest, 'Tell us, who the youth approaching?'
Said the second, 'Sure 'tis no one else, 'tis 'Omar.'
Said the youngest, she whom deep my love had smitten,
'He, 'tis he; and can the full moon hide her splendour?'

Diffidence of his own merits was certainly not among the poet's defects; and we can scarcely, in a character like his, wonder even at the impudence which dictated the following verses:—

Then I called a handmaid of my household,
Saying, 'Take good heed, let nought betray thee,
Whisper gently, gentlier yet, to Zeynab,
"But one kiss for him, thy own, thy 'Omar."'
Zeynab heard, and shook her laughing tresses—
Laughing answered, 'Whence so pert an envoy?
Thus would 'Omar trick the hearts of women?
'Tis a tale oft told; I know the sequel.'

Spring and summer passed thus, but 'Omar's suit advanced little; thanks to the coyness of the lady, and still more, it may be well believed, the vigilance of her guardians. The lover's passion had meanwhile risen to white heat; but fear of offence prohibited even his customary solace of verses, except under the disguise of an assumed object. 'Hind' was a name of historical reputation of beauty among Arabs, no less than 'Helen' among Greeks; and to 'Hind' accordingly several pieces of poetry, inspired by no other than Zeynab the daughter of Moosa, were now dedicated by the young Mogheeree; they rank among the freshest and sprightliest of his whole collection. One in particular, a popular favourite, and often selected for song by Arab musicians even at the present day, must not be here omitted:—

Ah that Hind would keep the word of love she promised,
Keep the word, and heal the heart herself has wounded;
And for once at least be fairly self-dependent!—
Weak indeed who never dares be self-dependent.
Once she stood with maidens in the tent conversing;
Hot the day, and naked she to cooling waters;
'Am I,' said she, 'fair indeed as 'Omar sings me?
Tell me, tell me truly, or does he but flatter?'
To each other then apart they smiled, and answered,
'Lovely in the lover's eye was aye the loved one.'
Not from truth they answered thus; 'twas all from envy;
Woman's envy still was beauty's shadow.

Love, however, at last prevailed; and a rendezvous was given at some distance from the town, in one of the valleys that lie south-east of Mecca, bordered by high abrupt rocks, and green in its winding course below with thick gardens and palm groves; the very place for a stolen interview. Thither Zeynab was to betake herself for an afternoon stroll with a few chosen attendants; while 'Omar was to meet her 'quite promiscuous,' as if returning from a journey. The plan succeeded; its opening scene is thus described by 'Omar in verses which long remained the envy and despair of rival poets:—

Late and early Love between us idle messenger had gone,
Till his fatal ambush in the valley of Khedab was laid:
There we met; nor sign, nor token, needed but a glance—no more;
All my heart and all its passion mirrored in her heart I saw;
And I said, ''Tis evening cool; the gardened houses are not far;
Why unsocial bide we seated weary on the weary beasts?'
Turned she to her damsels with, 'What say ye?' They replied,
'Alight;
Better far the cool earth's footing than the uneasy saddle perch.'
Down they glided, clustering starlike round the perfect queen of night,
Calmly wending in her beauty, as to music's measured beat.
Shyly drew I near and greeted, fearful lest some jealous eye
Should behold us, or the palm-trees tell the story of our loves.
Half withdrawn her veil, she whispered, 'Fear not; freely speak your
mind.
Kinsmen none are here to watch us; thou and I may claim our own.'
Bold I answered, 'Were there thousands, fearless would I bide their
worst;
But the secret of my bosom brooks no ear, no eye but thine.'
Then the maidens—ah the maidens!—noted how apart we drew;
Well they guessed unspoken wishes, and the inmost thoughts of love.
Said they, 'Give us leave to wander; bide thou here alone awhile;
We will stroll a little onwards, 'neath the pleasant evening star.'
'Be not long,' she answered; said they, 'Fear not; we will straight
return—
Straight be with thee;' and at once like trooping fawns they slipped
away.

Little need to ask their meaning; if they came or if they went—
Known to her, to me, the purpose : yet we had not said a word.

It may be easily imagined that Zeynab's attendants were too discreet to return in a hurry ; and the lovers, regardless of time, prolonged their meeting till evening had passed into night, when there came on a sudden storm of rain, such as is not uncommon among the hills of the Ḥejaz coast. 'Omar, gallantly fearful lest the light dress of his fair companion should suffer, took off his cloak, one of red embroidered silk and wool, such as still may be often seen worn by the upper classes in the peninsula, and cast it over her shoulders; while she playfully refused to accept the shelter except on condition that he should keep a part of it over himself ; and in this amiable proximity they remained a while till the shower had blown over, and the approach of dawn warned them to separate.

Thus far all was well, and might perhaps have continued so but for the vanity of 'Omar himself, who a few days afterwards published the whole adventure, not forgetting the circumstance of the shower and the cloak, in verses that expressed much and suggested more. In spite of the thin disguise of fictitious personages, Zeynab's name, joined with that of 'Omar, was soon in every mouth ; and Moosa, the father of the young lady, began to have serious fears as to the consequences of so compromising a courtship. Young 'Omar, wealthy and powerful, not only in the popularity of rising genius, but in the near relationship of princes and caliphs, was beyond the reach of his anger ; and Moosa determined accordingly to seek for his daughter in flight the security which he could not hope from open contest. Silently and secretly he prepared his departure from the Ḥejaz ; but 'Omar had notice of it in time

to obtain yet one more interview with the young lady. Zeynab, however, took her precautions, and brought with her this time, not her own attendants only, but several others of her Meccan female friends, easily induced to accompany her by their curiosity to make a nearer acquaintance with the first poet of the day. The rendezvous was in a valley at some distance out of town; and there the whole party remained from evening to sunrise; the result was a serious proposal of marriage on 'Omar's part, accepted by Zeynab; but on condition that, after her own and her father's removal to their projected establishment in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf, 'Omar should follow them thither, and there make his offer in due form. In the meantime he was neither to see her nor speak with her, either in public or in private.

'Omar accepted the conditions, intended probably in part as a trial of his constancy; and, with characteristic levity, had hardly accepted than he broke them. Only a few days later he learnt that Zeynab, before quitting Mecca, designed a visit to some one of the numerous memorials in its vicinity; and, thereon, mounted his celebrated 'white-starred charger' Komeyt, and alone, but armed, set out on a side-track in hopes of a meeting with the daughter of Moosa. On his way he fell in with another horseman, also armed and alone, travelling in the same direction. Conversation followed; and 'Omar, finding his new acquaintance sprightly and accomplished, was led on to treat him with a recital of his latest poem, commemorative of the very rendezvous just described. 'It would seem you do not know that the lady is my cousin,' said the other, with a dark look. 'Omar, disconcerted, did not even venture explanation or excuse, but turned his horse's head, and rode back full speed for Mecca.

Further concealment was impossible, and the worst consequences might be reasonably expected. Ḥirth, in great distress at the follies of his young half-brother, called him up; and, giving him a large supply of money for the road, sent him off to look after some family estates in the extreme south of Yemen, after a serious warning and a solemn promise exacted that he would amend his doings in future. 'Omar obeyed; but once alone, a male Mariana in the south, separation and solitude proved too much for him; and before many weeks of his banishment were over, he had begun to solace his loneliness with several pathetic effusions, to all of which Zeynab was the key-note. The following may serve as a specimen:—

Ah! where have they made my dwelling? Far, how far, from her, the loved one,
Since they drove me lone and parted to the sad sea-shore of 'Aden.
Thou art mid the distant mountains; and to each, the loved and lover,
Nought is left but sad remembrance, and a share of aching sorrow.
Hadst thou seen thy lover weeping by the sandhills of the ocean,
Thou hadst deemed him struck by madness: was it madness? was it love?
I may forget all else, but never shall forget her as she stood,
As I stood, that hour of parting; heart to heart in speechless anguish;
Then she turned her to Thoreyya, to her sister, sadly weeping;
Coursed the tears down cheek and bosom, till her passion found an utterance;
'Tell him, sister, tell him; yet be not as one that chides or murmurs,
Why so long thy distant tarrying on the unlovely shores of Yemen?
Is it sated ease detains thee, or the quest of wealth that lures thee?
Tell me what the price they paid thee, that from Mecca bought thy absence?'

These verses, repeated, though without the name of the composer, and taken up from mouth to mouth, ended by reaching Ḥirth, who on hearing them ex-

claimed, 'Omar, by Allah! he has broken his word already;' and for a time he seems to have given up the hope of reclaiming the irreclaimable.

'Omar returned to Mecca; and in exquisite poetry continued, now to lament the absent Zeynab, now to make love to other girls and women for five or six years. Meanwhile Zeynab's father, Moosa the Jomahee, with the sale-money of his Ḥejaz property had purchased houses and lands between Baṣrah and Koweyt, and lived there awhile in comfort, though in exile. His two elder daughters married; but Zeynab, whether faithful to 'Omar's memory or from some other motive, remained single. At the end of this time her father died; and Zeynab, while attending his funeral, noticed with alarm that among the crowd gathered on the occasion not a single kinsman or relative appeared; all were strangers. Returning home she summoned an old negress, once her nurse, and said, 'My father is now dead, and there is no one to protect or care for us here; why should I remain any longer in a strange country? Let us return to Mecca.' The old nurse made no opposition; so Zeynab sold her share in her father's newly-acquired estates, and having made a good bargain (for Baṣrah was then a rising town), took advantage of the yearly pilgrim caravan and returned with it Ḥejaz-wards. 'Omar happened to be at Mecca that year; and, as was his wont on these occasions, he had mounted his best horse, and gone out, splendidly dressed and attended, to divert himself by the sight of the new arrivals, and to coquet, wherever possible, with any pretty faces that might happen to be among them. While thus employed he saw approaching in an open litter, amid a respectable retinue, two persons: one a woman, evidently beautiful, though veiled; the other an aged negress. The contrast

piqued his curiosity. 'Who are you, and whence do you come?' said he, addressing the black. The answer was a Scotch one in substance, if not in form: 'God has set you a weary task if you have to enquire of every one in this crowd who they are, and whence they come.' 'I beg your pardon, aunt,' replied the polite 'Omar, 'but pray do me the kindness of telling me; perhaps I may have a good reason for making the question.' 'Well,' said the negress, 'if you will have it, we are just now come from Baṣrah, but by our origin and birthplace we are of Mecca; so now we are returning to our birthplace and origin.' 'Omar smiled. The negress looked at him, and noticed that two of his front teeth were discoloured (this had been done by a blow received during boyhood, some said in a battle, some in a love adventure), and rejoined, 'We know you at any rate.' 'And who may I be?' ''Omar,' she answered, 'the grandson of Aboo-Rabee'ah.' 'How do you come to know me?' asked he. 'By those discoloured teeth of yours, and by your whole appearance and manner.' 'Omar burst into poetry:—

Captive my heart had been, a slave to sorrow,
Since first she left me, bound on distant journey;
Years blurred the past with change and seeming solace,
But unforgot love once is love for ever.
Soft blew the wind, the garden rose and jasmine
Breathed all of her; 'She is not far,' they whispered.
'Who may you be?' I said: she frowned and answered,
'What wouldst thou have, of strangers thus enquiring?
This road we came from Baṣrah, but our dwelling
Once stood beside the sacred walls of Mecca.
Truth have we told; but say, thyself who art thou?
Answer: the question is not void of purpose.
Sure we have known thee, and thy name; conjecture
Is ours at least; and certitude may follow.
Stained are thy teeth: thy stature and appearance
Give thee for one long sundered, long remembered.'

One thou and I; how could I brook thy absence?
Is there who brooks that self from self be parted?
Blind to all else, my eyes behold thee only;
Cold to all else, to thee my heart is burning.

The courtship, thus resumed, was now carried on in good earnest. 'Omar married Zeynab; she bore him two children, a son, the stately and austere Ju'an, and a daughter, Amat-el-Wahid, of whom 'Omar seems to have been very fond: she finds an affectionate mention in some of his poems.

Whatever the beginning and progress of this intrigue may have been, its end at least was honourable success; but the 'universal lover' met sometimes with the rebuff which his conduct more frequently deserved. Thus, we learn that a young and lately married woman of the noble Dey'lee clan happening to be present on a pilgrim-visit to Mecca, 'Omar saw her during prayers within the 'Haram,' or inclosure of the Ka'abeh, and was struck by her beauty: he approached and spoke to her, but received no answer. On a second evening he dogged her steps till he found an opportunity for again addressing her; when she turned sharp on him with 'Away, fellow! Are you not on sacred ground? and is not this the time of prayer and worship?' Unabashed, 'Omar continued to pursue her with his attentions; till she had reason to fear some open scandal. So on the third evening she said to her brother (one version gives it her husband, Aboo-l-Aswad), 'I cannot easily find my way in these streets: would you come with me?' They set out together. 'Omar, who had perceived the lady at a distance, was already approaching, when the sight of the brother and his sword warned him off, just in time to hear repeated behind him a well-known couplet of the poet Jereer :—

Wolves attack the unguarded flock: of the sheep they have no fear;
But aloof they stand, and howl, if a watchdog grim be near.

The seventy or eighty years—for his biographers with true Eastern contempt of accuracy vary as to the number of decades they assign him—of 'Omar's life offer few of what are called leading events. Our hero was a gentleman, or rather a nobleman, at large, with a good income, the result of his father's mercantile energy, and the produce of his own estates. His customary residence was on the coast in the province of Tehamah, south of Mecca, to which latter place he punctually made his yearly pilgrimage, with what devotional zeal may be sufficiently inferred from the adventures already related. Nor did he make any secret of the matter.

When this chanced we were on pilgrim journey;
Heaven best knows the pilgrims and their object!

are the lines with which he concludes a lyric of intrigue and dissipation. Not unnaturally did his friend Ebn-'Akeek subjoin, 'The facts of your pilgrimage are a sufficient indication of its object, and no need to look further.'

'Omar is twice mentioned as taking part in the numerous military expeditions of the time: one, against the restless inhabitants of Hasa, then fermenting into the rebellion which ultimately separated them from the body of the Empire; the other, when he was already over seventy, if dates be exact, against the Byzantine capital itself during the reign of Suleyman, the seventh Caliph of the Omeyyah family. In this latter expedition the poet, according to Ebn-Khallikan, found a soldier's, and, in Mohammedan estimation, a martyr's death; perishing with countless others by the Greek fire that consumed the beleaguering Arab fleet. On

the other hand, the Isphahanee chronicler Aboo-l-Faraj brings him back to die some years later in his bed, at the advanced age of eighty. The former account is probably the more correct one; but in no case has the charge of military incapacity been laid against 'Omar; and personal cowardice, a fault rare among Arabs, whatever their tribe or clan, would have been indeed a prodigy in one descended from Koreysh.

Active, however, and energetic as he was in the pursuit of pleasure, 'Omar was incapable of the serious attention and steady work required for public and political duty. Leaving these cares to others of his kindred, his own most serious business in life seems to have been the administration of his large estates, some of which lay many hundred miles away from Mecca; and an occasional visit of courtesy to his kinsman, the ruling prince of the time being at Damascus. But he never took serious part with any of the countless factions that eddied over the seething surface of Mohammedan torrent, and already prenoted its ultimate and irreparable divergence into the two great streams, Sonnee and Shee'ah. Love and verse were all in all to him; and, like the founder of 'Strawberry Hill,' he made pleasure the constant business, business the occasional diversion, of his life.

At a later period of history Mohammedanism becomes almost synonymous with despotism in public life, and dulness in private. Rulers separated from their people by the multiple fences of a slavish court, and a wearisome, semi-idolatrous ceremonial; peoples stagnating in stupid ignorance and unmeaning fanaticism; women sundered from men by eternal veils, lattices, and eunuchs; apathy, monotony, varied only by frantic sensuality and joyless debauch—such is the picture that Western imagination is apt to form of the Islamitic

East; and though undoubtedly overcharged, it is a picture not, alas! wholly unfaithful to truth and to fact. But they are the facts of another age, and of other lands than those of 'Omar the Mogheeree. Persian satrapism and Turkish heaviness had not yet overshadowed and crushed Arab nationality and manners; and the innate tendency to freedom, almost equality, of intercourse between rulers and ruled, between men and women, with the semi-republican influences of commerce and literary genius, and the intensely social spirit that has made the generic name of 'man' identical in Arabic with 'companionship,' had yet their way, and held their own against the mystic and unamiable fanaticism breathed from Persia and Turkistan, and the despotic austerity of the family of 'Alee, that evil genius of the Mohammedan world.

In fact the anecdotes thus far selected from or in connection with 'Omar's biography show us the Arab life of the day in its true form, and hint, not obscurely, what it might ultimately have become had Damascus remained its capital, and the children of Omeyyah its leaders. Two more adventures, taken almost at random from the mass of narrative that the poet's best chronicler, Aboo-l-Faraj, has left us, may serve further to illustfate and complete the picture.

It is a hot autumn afternoon, the third before the yearly commemorative sacrifice of Mecca; north, south, and east the dusty roads and red slopes leading to the town are closely studded with bands of pilgrims, from Damascus, from Nejd, from Yemen, from the banks of the Euphrates; riders on horses, on asses, on mules, on camels, on dromedaries; all travel-stained and sunburnt; some weary and silent; others, the greater number, singing, laughing, and shouting for joy to find themselves at the end of their long and

tedious journey. Men and women, black and white, wealthy and poor, young and old, splendidly dressed or in rags, crowded together as they moved on, slowly nearing the low mud walls and taper minarets yet concealed from view by the rising grounds amid which the religious and patriotic centre of the Mohammedan world lies buried; or pitched their black travelling tents against the approach of evening among the sandy valleys that branch off from the main roads on every side. Mingled with the wayfarers, gazing or greeting, are knots of Meccan townsmen, brought out thus far to meet the new arrivals by general curiosity or special expectation; their light gay robes contrasting strangely with the coarse and soiled equipments of the pilgrims.

Handsomest of the handsome, gayest of the gay, our friend 'Omar the Mogheeree is easily distinguished among the multitude, or rather attracts to himself the notice of all. He is mounted on a cream-coloured Oman dromedary, its smooth coat tastefully stained with saffron and henna; its saddle and housings embroidered with silk and gold; the sword sheath that hangs by the rider's side is golden also. 'Omar's favourite negro Jennad follows him on foot, leading his master's choicest horse, a bay with a white off hind leg and a white mark on its forehead: this is 'Star,' who has often carried his master on visits of gallantry to the mountain-girls of 'Aseer and Nejd, and has been rewarded with a gold collar round his neck, besides what immortality verse can give.

Alongside of 'Omar, on a white mule, and gorgeous in embroidered robes of Heera manufacture, rides Ebn-Soreyj, the Mario of Ḥejaz singers: his dusky and irregular features, half-hidden by a veil, betray his mulatto origin; he is known everywhere as the first musician, the sprightliest boon-companion, and the

ugliest face of his day. A large train of attendants, 'Omar's men, dressed in the light yellow garments still popular in Yemen, surround their master. The whole party had strolled out of Mecca in the direction of Mina, gazing and gazed at, till they came to where a nobleman of Hejaz, a descendant of 'Abd-Menaf, wealthy and proud like all his kindred, had pitched for himself and his suite a whole cluster of tents—their temporary abode during the solemnities, which they had come like the rest to share. Stopping to look at them, 'Omar caught among the curtains of the encampment a glimpse of a lovely girl: it was the chieftain's only daughter, who had at that moment stepped out unveiled to take the air; several maids waited on her, to form as it were a screen between her and the passers-by. 'Omar urged his dromedary a step forward, and came full in view of the young lady. She, too, looked up; her attendants exclaimed, 'That is 'Omar the grandson of Aboo-Rabee'ah;' her eyes met his; but at the same instant the servants, prudent a moment too late, hurried her back into the tent and closed the hangings. 'Omar remained staring like one mazed; then, after a short silence, broke out into the following verses:—

In the valley of Mohassib I beheld her where she stood:
Caution bade me turn aside, but love forbade and fixed me there.
Was it sunlight? or the windows of a gleaming mosque at eve
Lighted up for festal worship? or was all my fancy's dream?
Ah those earrings! ah that necklace! Nowfel's daughter sure the maid,
Or of Hashim's princely lineage, and the Servant of the Sun!
But a moment flashed the splendour, as the o'er-hasty handmaids drew
Round her with a jealous hand the jealous curtains of the tent.
Speech nor greeting passed between us; but she saw me, and I saw
Face the loveliest of all faces; hands the fairest of all hands.
Daughter of a better earth, and nurtured by a better sky;
Would I ne'er had seen thy beauty! Hope is fled, but love remains.

However, the favourable occasion had gone by, and even 'Omar's tried ingenuity could not forecast a second meeting. Desirous to distract his thoughts, he addressed himself to Ebn-Soreyj, and said, 'I have been thinking how disagreeable it would be for us to return this evening to Mecca through such a crowd and dust. What do you say to our going on a little further till we find some quiet spot where we can lie all alone, and overlook at a distance the comers and goers, the pilgrims and the townspeople? We could stop there and pass the night undisturbed, and get back into town at our leisure in the morning.' 'Nothing better,' answered Ebn-Soreyj; 'but do you know of any such convenient place in particular?' 'Yes,' said 'Omar, 'the hillock called 'Aal-Shajrah, just above the road that joins Mina and Senef: we can sit up at the top, while the pilgrims pass on their way below; and thence we shall see them all distinctly, without their being able to see us.' Ebn-Soreyj joyfully agreed to the plan; and 'Omar, calling some of his attendants, ordered them, 'Go back to my house in town, and get ready a good supper, and bring it with plenty of wine to the hill 'Aal-Shajrah; we mean to ride round a little way, and shall find you arrived there before us.'

The hill in question is about six miles out of Mecca on the north-east; it stands between the branch road to Medinah and the direct road to Damascus; the summit is pointed, and overlooks the whole country to some distance. So thither 'Omar and Ebn-Soreyj went, and clambered up to the top, where they sat, eating and drinking, till the wine got somewhat the better of them. Then Ebn-Soreyj took up a cymbal, sounded it, and began to sing one tune after another, unremarked by the pilgrims who passed on their way below, till the evening darkened in. Then he raised

his voice to its utmost pitch, and sang the very verses that 'Omar had composed a few hours before; till all who were going by, horse or foot, in the deep shadow of the sunken road stopped to listen; and some one called out through the darkness, 'O, you who are singing up there, have you no fear of God, that you thus hinder the pilgrims from the accomplishment of their duty?' Then he stopped singing, and the crowd beneath moved on; till after a little while he forgot, and raised his voice higher than ever, for he was now fairly drunk; and so he continued, sometimes bewitching the pilgrims into a halt, and sometimes pausing to let them go on townwards; while 'Omar sat by enjoying the sport till it was now midnight. Then there came by along the road from Damascus one mounted on a blood horse of the highest breed; he too stopped to listen like one under a spell: then suddenly he turned out of the path, and rode right up the hill till he came close under the crest; when, folding one leg over the saddle, he called out, 'O singer, whoever you are, can you, so Allah bless you, do me the favour to go over that last tune of yours again?' Ebn-Soreyj answered, 'Yes, and twenty others, may Allah bless you into the bargain: which tune is it you wish for?' The horseman named it; and when Ebn-Soreyj had sung it, called for a second and a third; but on his asking for a fourth, 'With all my heart,' rejoined Ebn-Soreyj, 'but on condition that you alight from your horse, and come up hither and sit and drink with us.' 'That I cannot do,' answered the other from the darkness; 'but I beseech you to excuse me, and to sing me but one more tune, and regard not my being on horseback.' Ebn-Soreyj complied: when he had finished, the rider called out, 'In Allah's name are you not Ebn-Soreyj?' 'Yes I am he.' 'Life and happiness to you, Ebn-

Soreyj! And is not the other, who is sitting with you, 'Omar the grandson of Aboo-Rabee'ah?' 'Yes.' 'Life and happiness to you also, 'Omar, son of Aboo-Rabee'ah!' 'To you also,' called out 'Omar; 'but now that we have told you our names, pray what is yours? and who are you?' 'That is a question which I may not answer,' replied the horseman. On this Ebn-Soreyj grew angry and exclaimed, 'By Allah, if you were Yezeed himself, the son of 'Abd-el-Melik (the reigning Caliph), you could not be more insolent.' 'You are right; I am Yezeed, the son of 'Abd-el-Melik,' was the answer. On this 'Omar jumped up and ran down the hill to greet him; Ebn-Soreyj followed. 'I would willingly have stayed the night with you here,' said the heir-apparent of the Mohammedan throne, 'but it is festival-time as you know; and my attendants have all gone on before me to the town; so that my absence the whole night alone would certainly be remarked; and scandalous conjectures might be made; but here,' turning to Ebn-Soreyj, 'take this cloak and ring—they will do for a remembrance;' and with this, throwing the cloak from his shoulders, and drawing the ring from his finger, he set off at full gallop. Ebn-Soreyj, the singer, left in the dark with the presents, turned round without a moment's delay and made them over to 'Omar, saying, 'They will become you better than me.' 'Omar, not to be outdone, put a purse of three hundred gold pieces into the hands of the musician; and next day, when the mosque was at its fullest with townsmen and strangers from all quarters of the empire, appeared at public prayers wearing the imperial cloak and ring, at once recognised by all present; nor was 'Omar behindhand in taking to himself the full honour implied by such decorations.

It was a merry life; and Caliph, poet, and musician seem one and all to have been bent on enjoying it to the utmost. In this story art and talent level the barriers of rank; in the next they go further, and almost do away with those which in the East have been of all times yet more insuperable, the barriers of sex.

One spring morning 'Omar, lately arrived from his estates in the south, had pitched his travelling gear in the valley of Mina near Mecca; and had seated himself to enjoy the fresh air at the tent door, while his attendants stood around. A fine-looking middle-aged woman, handsomely dressed, approached the group, and wished them good morning. 'Omar returned the salute. 'Are not you 'Omar grandson of Aboo-Rabee'ah?' said the woman. He answered, 'The same; what do you want with me?' 'Omar's servants had discreetly withdrawn behind the tent. 'Long and happy life to you,' said the woman; 'have you any wish for an interview with the loveliest face, and the sweetest disposition, and the perfectest breeding, and the noblest birth of all living creatures?' 'Omar answered, 'What could I wish for more?' 'But under one condition.' 'Say it.' 'You must allow me,' continued the woman, 'to blindfold you with my own hands, and thus to lead you myself, till I have brought you into the very place which I intend; there I will undo the bandage; but before you leave I will tie up your eyes again, and so lead you back to your tent.' 'Omar, whose curiosity was only the more roused by such a proposition, consented. 'When,' said he, in his own version of the adventure, 'she had brought me to my destination, and taken the bandage off my eyes, I found myself in presence of a woman whose like for beauty and bearing I had never seen. She was seated on a kind of throne. I saluted her; she motioned to me to seat myself on the ground

opposite. "Are you 'Omar, the grandson of Aboo-Rabee'ah?" said she. "My name is 'Omar," I answered. "You," she continued, "are the man who takes away the character of noble ladies." "How so, in Heaven's name?" said I. She answered, "Are not you the author of these verses?"—

"By my brother's manhood," said she, "and my father's honoured age,
I will wake the whole encampment if thou leav'st not straight the tent."
And I turned, in fear departing, for the maiden's oath was strong:
But she smiled, and oath and menace in that smile dissolved away.
Followed kisses, followed raptures:—known to her and me the rest;
Think your will, and ask no questions: closed the tent, and dark the night.

Then she exclaimed "Up and off with you!" At the word the woman who had brought me there re-entered, blindfolded my eyes, led me out, and conducted me back to my own quarters, where she left me alone. I undid the bandage, and then sat down to pass the rest of the day in sorrow and heaviness of mind—God only knows how heavy. Night came at last. Next morning I took my place at the tent door, when lo! I beheld the same woman coming to me and saying, "Do you wish to pay a second visit?" "At your bidding," I answered. Hereupon she did exactly as she had done the day before, and took me with her to the rendezvous. I entered, and when permitted to look, saw the same lady on the throne. "So," said she, "it is you, the slanderer of damsels." "How so, in Heaven's name?" said I. She answered, "By your verses."

Swelled her lovely throat and bosom, as I said "Recline awhile
On the sand-hill:" half she leant her, half her fears forbad the couch;
And she said, "My plighted promise;—I submit to thy behest;
Though I tremble, and I know not—all so new; what wouldst thou, dear?"

Passed the night; cool broke the dawning. "Thou hast ruined me,' she said;
"Rise and 'scape; I would not bid thee:—if thou wilt, return again."

After which, "Off with you!" she exclaimed. I rose and was led out as before: then she recalled me, and said, "Were it not that we are on the eve of departure, and I fear lest I should hardly be able to contrive another meeting (besides the real desire I have to hear you talk, and that I wish to make the most of our interview), I would have sent you away this time too. Come now, take your ease, talk, and let me hear some more of your naughty poetry." I did as she bid me, and found that I was indeed addressing a woman the first of her sex in grace and learning. After a long conversation she rose and left the apartment. Meanwhile the middle-aged woman, her attendant, delayed a minute or two, so that I found myself all alone. On this I began looking about me, and saw close by an open vase, containing some kind of sweet-smelling ointment; into this vase I dipped my fingers, and then hid my hand under my cloak. Immediately afterwards the woman came in, bound up my eyes, and led me out of the room. But when I felt the fresh air, and knew that I was just at the entrance of the tent, I quietly slipped the hand, which I had smeared with the ointment, out from under my cloak, and laid it on the outside canvas; then drew it in again. Once back at my own place, I called some of my slaves, and said, "Whoever of you will find out for me a tent, on the canvas of which near its entrance is a grease-stain, scented, and looking like the mark of a palm and fingers, I will give him his liberty and five hundred gold pieces into the bargain." I had not long to wait when one of them ran in with, "Sir, come this

way." I went with him: the tent he brought me to bore in fact the mark of five fingers freshly impressed. It was the tent of Fatimah, the daughter of 'Abd-el-Melik, son of Merwan; and close by were the attendants and slaves, already busy in getting all things ready for their departure.' 'Omar returned home; but hardly had Fatimah set out than he started too, keeping the same road, though at a little distance. Arrived at a halting-place she looked out, and seeing not far off another pavilion with travelling tents round it, and a goodly suite, she enquired to whom they belonged: the answer was, 'To 'Omar, the grandson of Aboo-Rabee'ah.' She now became seriously alarmed on his account; and calling the woman whom she had before employed as a go-between, said to her, 'Tell him that I beseech him, in the name of God and of our common relationship, not to disgrace himself and me. What has he got in mind? and what can he want? Let him take himself away before I be shamed, and his own blood be shed.' The woman conveyed him the message in Fatimah's very words. But 'Omar answered, 'Come what may, I will not turn back unless she send me for a keepsake and token her under garment, the very one she has on her at the moment, next her person.' Fatimah consented, and the gossamer shirt was sent; but on receiving it 'Omar's indiscreet passion only increased, and he continued following in her track till she was within a few miles of Damascus, when, after a last interview, he gave up the hopeless pursuit, and returned unmolested to his own land, where he dedicated several poems to the adventure and to the praises of Fatimah.

The opening scene of that in which he describes his daring nocturnal visit is among the most spirited as the most graphic in his collection:—

'Whence, friend, so pale?' thou ask'st me; 'tis remembrance:
Tents furled, and laden beasts, and crowds departing.
Midmost her place, closed in with crimson curtains,
From wind and sun, from lover's eyes secluded.
By hill and dale they passed, the North-star leading,
Band after band in long procession winding.
Night fell; they pitched their rest; disguised I ventured;
Well tried the sword, sole helpmate of my venture.
Dark rose the tent; within the watch-light flickered
O'er beauty's self on silken couch reclining.
All round the guards in iron-vested circle,
Prostrate they lay, of watch and post forgetful;
Death-like they seemed to strew some field of battle,
Not dead, but toil outworn, and drunk with slumber.
Roused at my step, she started; woke the damsel;
Woke to her call a sister maiden hastening;
'"Tis he,' she cried, 'himself; 'tis he, 'tis 'Omar!
What brought him here, through midmost foes and darkness?
Ah me! too mad the love! too rash the lover!
How 'scape the death? how bide the shame, the danger?'
'Fear not; my fame, my life for thine,' I answered,
'From thousand foes secure this arm to shield thee.'

And so on, through sixty more couplets, containing much of love, and not a little of vanity.

Under the later Abbaside Caliphs, the fate of a poet, whatever his rank or talent, who should have dared to make free with the name of the reigning sovereign's daughter in amatory verse, would have been doubtful at best; and under Persian or Turkish rulers it would not have been doubtful at all. But the Benoo-Omeyyah, though often despotic and even sanguinary at the bidding of ambition or policy, were yet genuine Arabs; and among Arabs, not the Benoo-'Adra only, Heine's favourites, 'who when they love they die,' but throughout the tribes of Nejd, and the northern peninsula, adventures like those of 'Omar the Mogheeree and Fatimah the Caliph's daughter were neither uncommon nor even disreputable. True, when pushed

too far, or when the principal parties concerned happened to belong to hostile tribes, or when some particular hot-tempered cousin or jealous rival came on the stage, the issue might be serious, and, in rare instances, fatal; but under no circumstances did disgrace attach itself to the loved or the lover so long as their affection was proof against inconstancy and unstained by vice. The so-called chivalrous feeling, that lays the laurels won by sword or pen at the feet, not of a chief or a party, but of female beauty and excellence—that consecrates its efforts to the honour of woman, and ennobles daring and danger by her name and behoof, had always existed in germ among the Arab tribes, even during the epoch of the first barbarism, and may be yet found among the inhabitants of Nejd, where the first ranks of battle are even in our day, as in old time, headed by a maiden, the standard-bearer and arbitress of the fight. But it was in the genuine days of Arab leadership, from the establishment of the Damascene throne till its removal to Bagdad, that this form of Arab life-poetry spread widest and produced its most brilliant examples.

To return, however, to 'Omar. Though unvisited by any direct chastisement for his rashness, he underwent for some time the indirect penalty of exclusion from the Court, where indeed his presence, so long as the daughter of 'Abd-el-Melik remained there, could hardly have been permitted; but at last her marriage with one of her numerous cousins, and shortly afterwards the death of her father, did away with this exclusion; and his son and successor the Caliph Waleed, on a visit to Mecca during the first year of his reign, restored the poet to all his former favour and easy intimacy. The prudence of family decorum seems to have abstained from any notice of Fatimah's share in the adventure.

X.

THE BRIGAND, TA'ABBET-SHURRAN.

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A FEW months' experience of Arabia Proper suffices to teach the traveller of our day that the terms 'Arab' and 'Bedouin,' though not unfrequently used as if convertible, are by no means such in reality. It may further teach him, if he knew it not before, that 'Bedouin' and robber are also not necessarily synonymous; that the latter designation is no less ill-sounding to the ordinary Arab ear, than it would be to the European; and that the class which it represents is amenable to whatever penalties Arab law and society can inflict, much as it would be in more civilized lands of juries and police-force. Nor is this, so far as Arabia itself is concerned, a recently introduced order of things, due to comparatively modern influences, social or political; on the contrary, a retrospective view of the national annals, even when carried back to the first day-dawn of præ-Islamitic history, presents no other aspect; and full five centuries before the appearance of the Meccan lawgiver, we find the thief, the robber, and the brigand already paled off from and at war with established order and right; already marked with the outlaw's brand, and subject to all its sternest consequences. And yet, in spite of these facts, it cannot

be denied that, in these same earliest times, the great peninsula bore, as it still, and to a certain extent not undeservedly, bears, an evil name for the number and the audacity of its robbers. The cause is inherent, and not far to seek.

A population much too scanty in proportion to the geographical extent of the land it occupies, as also, though from different reasons, one notably overcrowded, must always render the efficacious protection of individual life and property a difficult task, even for the strongest and most energetic administration: and the difficulty will, under a weak or negligent rule, amount to absolute impossibility. Thus, for example's sake, the open spaces of the lonely Campagna, the wild glens of Albania or Koordistan, the parched sierras of central Spain, and the defiles of southern Greece, have long been, and, bating external influences, may long remain, under the feebleness of decrepit or malformed Governments, Papal or Turkish, Spanish or Hellene, the dread of the wayfaring merchant and the defenceless tourist. In lands like these, the town gates are often the ultimate limits of security. Indeed it is not, as we all know, many centuries since, that scantiness of inhabitants, combined with a defective, because an incipient, organization, rendered large tracts of France, of Germany, and of England itself, dangerous travelling for the unarmed and unescorted.

But nowhere, perhaps, in the old world at least, does there exist an equal extent of land in which all the sinister conditions that favour brigandage are so perplexingly combined and aggravated, as in Arabia Proper. There, for distances measured, not by miles but by degrees, vast expanses of stony, irreclaimable desert, of pathless sands and labyrinthine rocks, place utterly disproportionate intervals of enforced solitude

between the watered valleys and green slopes where alone anything like settled life and social union can make good its footing. A week of suns may not seldom rise and set on the slow-moving caravan without bringing into view a single roof: indeed, the known life-sparing clemency of the Arab robber is chiefly due, not to any favourable speciality of character, but to this very circumstance of solitude; in other words, to the brigand's certainty that long before his plundered victims can reach help, or even give tidings, he himself and his booty will be far beyond pursuit. 'Desert means license,' says the Arab proverb; the wild lands breed wild men; and thus it is that centuries of comparative law and order, the organizing vigour of Mahomet and his first successors, the sceptre of the Caliphs, and the military discipline of the Turks, have each in their turn failed to render the sand-waves of the 'Nefood' and the gullies of 'Toweyk' wholly safe ventures for the traveller; while even the rigour, amounting almost to tyranny, of the more recent Wahhabee rulers, who avowedly tolerate no spoilers besides themselves, cannot render permanently secure the intercourse and traffic of one Arab province—oasis, I might better say—with another.

But during the latter years of the præ-Islamitic period, when the entire centre of the peninsula, and no small portion of its circumference—that is, whatever was not immediately subject to the rule of the Yemenite kings, and of their or the Persian viceroys—resembled best of all a seething cauldron, where the overboiling energies of countless clans and divisions of clans dashed and clashed in never-resting eddies; when no fixed organization or political institution beyond that of the tribe, at most, had even a chance of permanence in the giddy whirl,—open robbers were, as

might have naturally been expected, both numerous and daring; nor can we wonder if, when every man did more or less what was right in his own eyes, the list of the colour-blind to the moral tints of 'mine' and 'thine' should have been a long one, and have included many names of great though not good renown. Indeed, it might almost have been anticipated that the entire nation would have been numbered in the ill-famed category, till the universality of fact absorbed the distinction of name; and none would have been called robbers, because all were so.

Fortunately the clan principle interfered; and by tracing certain, though inadequate, limits of social right and wrong, rendered trangression alike possible and exceptional. He who, led astray by private and personal greed, plundered, not on his clan's account, but on his own; who, without discrimination of peace-time or war, of alliance or hostility, attacked the friends no less than the foes of his tribesmen, was, from the earliest times, accounted criminal; while he who, in concert with his kin, assailed and spoiled a common and acknowledged enemy, was held to have performed an honourable duty. After this fashion the Arabs learned to draw the line—in no age or country a very broad one—between war and brigandage; and by vehement reprobation of the latter, stood self-excused for their excessive proneness to the former.

From such a state of things, where geographical configuration and political confusion conspired to encourage what naseent organization and primal morality agreed to condemn, arose the præ-Islamitic brigand class. This, although recruited in the main, after the fashion of other lands, by idleness, want, and the half-idiocy that has much, if physiology tell true, to do with habitual vice, yet comprised also men who under more

propitious circumstances might have led a different and an honourable career. These were they who, having, in consequence of some special deed of blood, sudden mishap, or occasionally sheer innate fierceness of temperament, become nearly or quite detached from their own particular clan and its alliances, led, henceforth at large, a life of 'sturt and strife,' of indiscriminate plunder and rapine; disavowed by all, hostile to all, yet holding their own; and that, strange though it may seem, not by physical force merely, but also by intellectual pre-eminence. They stand before us in the national records, apart from the great chiefs and leaders of their age, apart from the recognized heroes, the 'Antarahs and Barakats of epic war, wild, half-naked, savage, inured to hardship, danger, and blood; yet looked upon by their countrymen with a respect amounting almost to awe; and crowned with a halo of fame visible even through the mist of centuries, and under the altered lights of Islam; men to be admired, though not imitated; to be honoured while condemned; a moral paradox, explained partly by the character of the times they lived in, partly by their own personal qualities.

When a nation is either wholly barbarous or wholly civilized, the records of its 'criminal classes' are of little interest, and of less utility. In the former case they form, indeed, the bulk of the local chronicle; but the tale they tell of utter and bestial savagery, the mere repetition of brute force, cunning, and cruelty, is alike purportless, tedious, and disgusting. On the other hand, among nations well advanced in civilization, the ban laid on exceptional rebels against the reign of law is so withering, and the severance between them and the better life of the land so entire, that nothing remains to a Jack Sheppard or a Bill Sykes but stupid,

hateful, unmeaning vice, unfit either to point the moral of the novelist or to adorn the tale of the historian.

But between the two extremes of barbarism and of culture, the records of most nations exhibit a middle or transition period, when the bonds of society, though formed, are still elastic; while public morality is already sufficiently advanced to disallow much that public order is as yet too feeble to repress. In such a period the highway robber is apt to be regarded with a sort of half-toleration, as a relic of the 'good old times;' and even becomes in the estimation of many a sort of conservative protest against the supposed degeneracies and real artificialities of progress; a semi-hero, to be, metaphorically at least, if not in fact, hung in a silken halter, and cut down to the tune of a panegyric. On these frontier lines between order and anarchy, in this twilight between license and law, flourish Robin Hoods, Helmbrechts, Kalewi-Poegs, and their like; equivocal celebrities, brigands by land and corsairs at sea; feared, respected, and hated by their injured contemporaries; more honoured by later and securer generations, and ultimately placed on pedestals of fame side by side with their betters in the national Valhalla. And what the era of King John was to England, the 'Interregnum' to Germany, the days of Sueno and his peers to Scandinavia, that were to Arabia the two centuries that preceded the appearance of Mahomet, but chiefly the former. Heroes had ceased to be robbers, but robbers had not wholly ceased to be heroes.

A more special reason for the peculiar and prominent rank held in præ-Islamitic Arab story by these wild rovers of the desert, is to be sought in the intense vigour and activity of the prevailing national spirit, of which these very men were an ill-regulated and

exaggerated, yet by no means an unfaithful representation. To the physical advantages of strength, fleetness, quickness of eye, and dexterity of hand—all objects of deliberate and systematic culture in Pagan Arabia, no less than in Pagan Greece—they added many of the moral qualities then held in the highest esteem by their countrymen—patient endurance, forethought, courage, daring, and even generosity; while some of them in addition attained lasting fame for excellence in poetry, then, as now, the proudest boast of the Arab. Thus it was that although rapine, bloodshed, and, not rarely, treachery, might dim, they could not wholly eclipse the splendour of their better qualities and worthier deeds.

Such was the classical præ-Islamitic brigand, as portrayed to us in the pages of the Hamasah, of Aboo-l-Faraj, Meydanee, and others; not indeed the full image, but the skeleton and ground-plan of his race; a type in which the Arab character, not of those ages only but of all succeeding generations, is correctly though roughly given; untameable, self-reliant, defiant, full of hard good sense and deep passion, a vivid though a narrow imagination, and a perfect command of the most expressive of all spoken languages; while at the same time these very men, by their isolation, their inaptitude for organized combination, their contempt for all excellence or development save that of the individual, their aversion to any restraint however wholesome, and above all their restless inconstancy of temper, give the measure of Arab national weakness, and too clearly illustrate that incoherent individualism which ruined the Empires of Damascus, Bagdad, and Cordova, and blighted even in its flower the fairest promise of the Arab mind.

Their muster-roll is a long one; but at its head

stand eminent three names of renown, illustrated by records of exceptional completeness. These are Ta'abbet-Shurran, Shanfara', and Soleyk, men each of whom deserves special mention, because each represents in himself a peculiar subdivision of the great brigand class.

'Ta'abbet-Shurran,' or, 'He has taken an evil thing under his arm,' is the composite appellation by which Arab story recognizes its robber-hero of predilection. His real name was Thabit, the son of Jabir; the clan of Fahm, to which he belonged, formed part of the great Keys-'Eglan family, the progeny of Modar; and accordingly of 'Most'areb, that is 'adscitious Arab,' or, in mythical phrase, of Ismaelitic, not of ''Aarab,' 'pure Arab,' or of Southern and Kahtanee origin. The Fahm Arabs, nomade once, but tamed down by the process of the suns into semi-agriculturists, still, as in the century, the fifth of our era, when Ta'abbet-Shurran lent his sinister lustre to their name, frequent the wild and secluded, but well-watered gorges that lie immediately behind the mountains of Ta'if and Aseer, south-east of Mecca, somewhat apart from the main lines of Arab land communication; and while they have secured a practical independence by nominal acquiescence in the political or religious phases of their more powerful neighbours, scarcely bear themselves a trace of the many influences that have again and again remodelled the not distant capital of the Peninsula. A few earth villages with low yellowish walls, a somewhat larger number of black tent-groups; here and there a scraggy enclosure of palms, melons, and vetches, or a thinly verdant patch of pasture; a fair allowance of goats and camels, of rock and sand between; lean dusky men in long shirts and tattered cloaks, striped or black; near the houses some muffled

women in dark-blue cloth, and glass arm-rings; some very brown and naked children, seemingly belonging to no one in particular,—such is the land and tribe of Fahm, rich in blood and genealogies, miserably poor in all besides, and a fit nursing-stock for robbers, even now.

How the Fahmite Thabit, son of Jabir, came by the denominative sentence which has almost superseded his original name in his country's literature, is variously related. According to one account, he had gone out while yet a mere boy on some lonely errand, probably to look after some stray camel, and had advanced far into the desert, when suddenly he saw what seemed a large goat perched upon a rock before him. At his approach the thing darted away; the lad followed, and being fleet and sure of foot, soon overtook and captured it. But to bring it home was no easy matter, for the brute, not content with kicking and struggling, took to becoming heavier and heavier every minute, till Thabit, whose strength had only just sufficed to carry it up to the limits of the encampment, was forced to let it drop. But hardly had it touched the ground than, in full view of all the horrified bystanders, it assumed its proper form, that of a Ghowl, or demon, and vanished.* 'Ta'abbet-Shurran' ('He has brought a mischief under his arm') said the clansmen one to another; and this henceforth was Thabit's name. In this story is adumbrated what the Greeks, like the Arabs, would have called the 'dæmon' character of the man himself. Another and a more prosaic version substitutes for the goat-ghowl, Thabit's own sword, which he was in the habit of thus carrying no less persistently than Louis Philippe his umbrella, and which certainly wrought mischief enough, as we shall soon see.

On details like these historical criticism would be a mere waste of learning and ingenuity; the general truthfulness of a portrait is more to our present purpose than the minute precision of a photograph. All annalists agree in representing Ta'abbet-Shurran as an essentially 'wild man;' clever, talented even, but irreclaimable; a born rebel to all social law and custom; one of the *ferœ naturâ* whom the literature of modern times is wont to paint in somewhat rounded contours and prismatic colours, but whose real lineaments stand out harsh and vigorous in one of the son of Jabïr's authentic poems, where his own ultimate hero-ideal is thus portrayed:—

Nor exults he nor complains he; silent bears whate'er befalls him,
Much desiring, much attempting; far the wanderings of his venture.
In one desert noon beholds him; evening finds him in another;
As the wild ass lone he crosses o'er the jagged and headlong ridges.
Swifter than the wind unpausing, onward yet, nor rest nor slackness,
While the howling gusts outspeeded in the distance moan and faulter,
Light the slumber on his eyelids, yet too heavy all he deems it;
Ever watchful for the moment when to draw the bitter faulchion;
When to plunge it in the heart-blood of the many-mustered foemen,
While the Fates bystanding idly grin to see their work accomplished.
Loneliness his choice companion; and the guide-marks of his roaming.—
Tell me, whither guide the mazes of the streaky-spangled heavens?

'As the dawn, so the day,' says an Arab proverb; and the circumstances under which Ta'abbet-Shurran quitted his family and tribe while yet a mere boy, give a tolerable insight into what his character even then was, and what an after career might be augured for him. The 'frightful, desperate, wild, and furious' of Shakespeare's young Richard is no less applicable to the former stage of Ta'abbet's life, than 'daring, bold, and venturous' to the latter. To Western ears the tale may sound a strange one; but to those who have

passed a day among the tents of Wadee-l-Kora, or a night on the gravel-strewn plains of 'Aared, it has little startling, and nothing incredible.

The mother of Ta'abbet-Shurran, left a widow by the death of her first husband Jabir, while our hero and his four brave but less celebrated brothers were yet mere children, had married again, and this time her choice had fallen on a man named 'Amir, of the tribe of Hodeyl; a clan famous alike for warriors and poets, the latter of whom have bequeathed to posterity an entire volume, or Divan, of verses, oftener studied than understood, even by Arab commentators and critics. 'Amir himself was a poet; and some by no means contemptible performances of his in this line have come down to us. Second, or even third and fourth marriages have never involved any discredit in Arab opinion, whether Pagan or Mahometan; nor would the merry wife of Bath have needed much argument to make good her case, had her pilgrimage been to 'Okad, or Mecca, instead of Canterbury. The only inconveniences a buxom and well-to-do Arab widow needed, or for the matter of that, still needs carefully to avoid, were family jealousies and clannish dissensions: the relict of Jabir ran her matrimonial ship in its second voyage on both these rocks. Hodeyl, though a neighbouring was not a kindred clan to Fahm; and Ta'abbet-Shurran, or, to give him his domestic name, Thabit, who was the eldest and fiercest among his brothers, soon learned to look on his stepfather as an intruder, and on his position in the household as an abiding insult. When 'Amir (so continues the narrative) saw the lad beside him growing up with evident signs in his face of a hatred which he took no pains to conceal, he said one day to his wife, 'By heaven, this youngster's manner causes me real uneasiness: our marriage is the cause;

had we not better separate at once before worse happens? Divorce is a less evil than bloodshed.' But the woman, who seems to have liked the company of her new husband better than the children of her old one, answered: 'First try if you cannot clear the fellow out of the way by some stratagem.' 'Amir accordingly waited his opportunity, till when a convenient time came he said to the lad, 'Are you disposed to accompany me on a raid?' 'With all my heart,' was the ready answer. 'Come along, then,' said 'Amir. So they set out both of them together; but 'Amir purposely omitted to take any provisions with them for the road. They journeyed on all that night and the next day, without once halting, till the second evening closed in, by which time 'Amir made certain that the lad must be well-nigh famished for want of food. Thus thinking, he led the way in a direction where enemies were likely to be, till at last there appeared the gleam of a fire burning at some distance in front. 'Amir then stopped and said to his stepson, 'Halloa, boy! we are short of food, and must get something to eat; go over to where you see that fire, and ask the folk who are cooking by it to give us a share of their meal.' Thabit answered, 'What, man! is this a time for eating?' 'Time or not, I am hungry,' 'Amir rejoined, 'so off with you, and bring me some supper.' Thabit made no further answer, but went. As he neared the fire he saw two of the most notorious ruffians in the whole land sitting by it; they were in fact the very men into whose hands his stepfather had designed that he should fall. When the reflection of the fire fell on the lad, the ruffians saw him and sprang up to seize him; he turned and ran; they followed; but he was lighter of foot than they, and kept ahead, till looking over his shoulder he observed that one of

his pursuers had outstripped the other; then suddenly turning on the nearer of the two, he closed with him, and laid him dead at a blow. This done, without a moment's pause he rushed on the other, who stood bewildered, and disposed of him in the same manner. He then walked leisurely to the fire which they had lighted, and there found some unleavened bread baking under the cinders; this he took, and brought it, without tasting it, to his stepfather, saying, 'Eat—may it choke you!' But he himself refused to touch a morsel. 'Amir said, 'Tell me all about it, and how you came by it.' The lad answered, 'What is that to you? eat, and ask no questions.' So 'Amir ate, but more from compulsion than appetite, while his fear of the young devil increased every instant, till, unable to contain his curiosity, he again begged the boy, adjuring him by all the rights of companionship to tell him the whole adventure. Thabit did so, and the result was that 'Amir now feared him worse than ever. After some hours' rest they again went on, and soon reached the pasture grounds of the hostile tribe, whence they succeeded in driving off some camels, and then turned homewards with their booty, taking, however, a distant and circuitous way to avoid pursuit. For three successive nights on the road 'Amir said to his stepson, 'Make choice which half of the night you would best like to keep watch over the camels; as for me, I will take charge of them for the other half, while you sleep.' But Thabit as regularly answered, 'Make your choice yourself; it is all one to me.' Free thus to arrange matters according to his own liking, 'Amir used to sleep during the first half of the night, while his stepson sat up and kept guard; at midnight 'Amir rose and relieved the lad, who then went and lay down for a few hours; but when Thabit seemed once to be

fast asleep, 'Amir took the opportunity to lie down and go to sleep also; so that in fact he never kept watch at all. Thus passed three nights. On the fourth and last—for they were now nearing their own land—'Amir thought that the lad must certainly be overcome with fatigue and drowsiness. So he lay down as usual and took his fill of sleep, while Thabit remained keeping good watch till midnight came, when it was 'Amir's turn to rise and guard. This he did, till after a while he saw the lad to all appearance sound asleep, when he said within himself, 'Surely the fellow must now be tired out, and hard of waking; now or never is the time to get rid of him altogether.' Not feeling, however, quite sure whether his stepson's slumbers were in reality as deep as they seemed, he thought it best to try an experiment first; so, taking up a pebble from the ground beside him, he flung it to some distance, when lo! hardly had the stone touched the sand, than the lad started up bolt upright, with 'What noise was that?' 'Amir, feigning surprise, answered, 'On my life I do not know; but it seemed to me to come from the direction where the camels are. I heard it, but could not make it out clearly.' Hereon Thabit went and prowled about, searching on all sides in the darkness, till, having discovered nothing, he returned and lay down. A second time the stepfather waited, long enough as he thought; then took a little pebble, smaller than the first, and jerked it away. It fell a long way off; but no sooner had it struck the plain, than the boy was on his feet again, exclaiming, 'What was that?' 'Really I cannot say,' was the answer; 'this is the second time I have heard it; perhaps one of the camels has got loose.' Instantly Thabit began prowling hither and thither in the dark night, but of course could find nothing on which to fix his suspicion;

so he returned to his place and laid him down once more. A third time 'Amir waited till a full hour had passed, and then took up the very smallest pebble he could find, and flung it away with all his force as far as possible. But the result was all one; up leaped the lad, fresh as at first, only that this time he asked no questions, but, setting off without a word, searched thoroughly on all sides around; then returned, and coming close up to his stepfather, said, 'Fellow, I do not like these doings of yours; so I give you now fair warning, the next time I hear anything more of this kind, by G—d you are a dead man.' With this he went a little apart and settled himself again to sleep; while 'Amir, as he himself afterwards told the story, passed the remaining hours of darkness wide awake, and in mortal fear, lest by some accident any one of the camels should really stir, and the lad jump up and kill him. Next day they reached the tents of Fahm; but Thabit, who guessed rightly enough that a plot had been laid against him, and that his mother had been privy to it, would not remain any longer in the family, but took to the desert. 'Amir also shortly after found his position in the tribe, who had got an inkling of the matter, an unpleasant one; so he divided his goods with his wife, and divorcing himself from her, returned to the pastures of Hodeyl.

However, Thabit, or Ta'abbet-Shurran, as, in compliance with his Arab chroniclers, I shall henceforth call him, became subsequently reconciled with his mother; and often when weary, or hard-pressed by pursuers, availed himself of the temporary repose and shelter of her tent. With his own tribe too, the men of Fahm, he always remained on friendly terms, though he took no part henceforth in their public affairs; nor was he regarded by them as entitled to their protection, much

less assistance. But for all others whatever, he was simply an outlaw and a robber; while the clan of Hodeyl, which he had early learned to hate on his step-father's account, was, his whole life through, the special object of his depredations.

There is a region which, while it belongs to none of the three great provinces of Western and Central Arabia—to Hejaz, that is, Nejd, or Yemen—yet forms a kind of junction-tract between them, and is in consequence traversed by most of the great Arab routes that lead from all directions to the old centre of commercial and social activity, the territory of Mecca. From the earliest times down to our own, this border-land has been a favourite resort of highwaymen; partly on account of the frequent opportunities of plunder afforded by passing travellers and caravans, partly from its own topographical peculiarities, which seem to make it out as a fitting repair for brigands and outlaws. It is an intricate labyrinth of valleys, narrow and winding where they first descend from the rugged ranges of Jebel Aseer on the west, but widening out as they approach the low level of the great desert or 'Dahna,' and assuming the form of long shallow gullies where they rise again towards the table-land of Nejd. Westward the hills are frequently wooded with 'Ithel,' the Arabian tamarisk, with 'Rind,' or wild laurel, with 'Sidr,' a pretty dwarf acacia, besides the spreading 'Markh,' and other large semi-tropical trees; while under the shade of these coverts numerous wild animals make their lair; wolves, foxes, jackals, hyænas, and especially the small but ferocious Arabian panther, black-spotted on a light yellow ground, the terror of the herded gazelles, and sometimes of the hunter also. In other places the rocks are precipitous, bare and inaccessible to all but the wild goats that browze the

occasional tufts of thin grass or dwarf shrubs springing from their clefts. The valleys, where narrow, form water-courses in the rainy season; and even in the heats of mid-summer not unfrequently shelter deep pools, protected from sun and wind by some over-hanging rock; little patches too of cultivation occur here and there, marking the permanent establishment of a few families, or a moderate stretch of green justifies the presence of some herdsmen's tents. But nowhere do the conditions of the land allow of anything like real populousness; and the abruptness of the local barriers tends to divide the scanty inhabitants into small, almost isolated clusters, while by the same fact it detains them in a state of semi-barbarism, scarcely, if at all, affected by centuries of comparative civilisation around.

Further on however, where these valleys enter the 'Dahna',' the prospect is dreary indeed; rock and sand, the latter light and ever shifting, the former abrupt and rugged, or spreading into miles of continuous stone-sheet; the whole appearing much as the bottom of the ocean might possibly do were it upheaved and left exposed to the sun; an imagination not far removed, it may be, in this case, from the geological reality of things. But, jotted as at random through the waste, where least expected amid the utter seeming drought, and discoverable only by long practice and that intimacy with the desert which few but outlaws are likely to acquire, lie small pale green spots, marked out by the wild palm, the feathery 'Ithel,' and the tangled 'Semr' thorn. Here water is to be found when dug for at the depth of a few feet under earth; here also is wood enough for the modest requirements of Arab cookery; here the traveller may occasionally halt at mid-day or night-fall; and here the robber, flying or pursuing, may take a few hours' stolen repose.

This is the land now known as El-Kora, Soleyyel, Bisha', and Aftaj; a land long unchanged, and likely long to remain so, both in itself and in its inhabitants.

On its outskirts west and north spread the pastures of Hodeyl, a tribe once numerous and powerful, and even now not only independent of, but actively hostile to, the powers that be; to the south are the small but many villages of Bajeelah, a Yemenite or 'Arab' tribe, who, with others of their kindred, extend down to the frontiers of rich and populous Nejran; to the east stretched, in Ta'abbet-Shurran's time, the vast encampments of Temeen and 'Aamir, the chief of all the central 'Most'areb,' or 'adscitious' clans; but these last are now crystallized into Wahhabee provinces.

On all of these, now one, now the other, Ta'abbet-Shurran made his predatory attacks, disregardful alike of national alliance or enmity; sometimes alone, more often in company with other outlaws, to whom he acted as a temporary leader. Many of these raids have been recorded at great length by Arab chroniclers, who have besides preserved to us the verses in which the robber-hero, not more modest in self-praise than the generality of poets, celebrated his own prowess. A few of these anecdotes, rendered as literally as may be, consistently with transferring, or at least attempting to transfer, the vividness of the original Arab picture to the dissimilar canvas of the European mind—no easy task—will best illustrate the man, and those amongst whom he lived.

Once of a time he had led a band of fellow-brigands on an expedition directed against the herds and havings of the Benoo Hodeyl, not far from Ta'if. On their way the party passed beneath a precipice of great height; its face showed far up the entrance of a cavern, above which Ta'abbet-Shurran's practised eyes could detect a swarm of bees hovering. Now, wild honey—for art-

made hives and tame bees were yet unknown—was the only substitute possessed by the Arabs of those days for sugar, and ranked accordingly as a choice, almost indeed a necessary, dainty. Ta'abbet and his crew at once postponed their original design on sheep and camels in favour of this rarer booty; and by long and circuitous paths clambered up the mountain till they stood on its brow, right above the caverned cliff. Next, Ta'abbet tied a camel-rope round his waist, while his comrades made fast the other end to the stump of a tree, and taking with him a couple of empty skins, allowed himself to be lowered against the mountain face, till he dangled opposite to the mouth of the cave, into which he then contrived to swing himself; much like Shakespeare's samphire-gatherer, or a Norwegian in quest of sea-fowl. As he had conjectured, a large store of excellent honey had collected within the cavern, and he proceeded at his leisure to fill the skins he had brought with the desired prize, unsuspicious of any danger from without. But while he thus busied himself, some men of Hodeyl, who, hidden in the brush-wood on the upper slope, had watched all these doings, suddenly rushed out on the associates of the Fahm brigand, and drove them off from their post. The Hodeylees, now masters of the position, began twitching the upper end of the rope that girdled Ta'abbet's waist, and thus apprised him of an unfriendly presence. Without hesitation he cut the cord with his dagger, and then advancing to the mouth of the cave looked up.

'Caught,' exclaimed his enemies.

'Caught, indeed!' sneeringly replied Ta'abbet; 'that we have yet to see. Do you mean to take ransom and let me go unharmed?'

'No conditions with such as you,' they answered from above.

'Aha! is that your game?' rejoined the robber. 'You think that you have already caught me, and killed me, and eaten my honey too, which I have been at such pains to get. No, by G—d! that shall never be.'

Thus saying, he brought the skins to the mouth of the hole, and poured out all the honey, so that it went trickling down the face of the precipice in their sight; next he took the empty skins, honey-smeared as they were, and tied them tight against his breast and body; and then, while the men of Hodeyl stood looking on in stupid amazement, let himself slip feet foremost down the crag, with such dexterity that in a few minutes he was safe at the bottom, some hundreds of yards below; and long before his intended captors, descending by the ordinary path, had circled the mountain and reached the other side, was far away beyond all chance of pursuit.

So brilliant an escape deserved to be commemorated by its hero in a spirited poem, from which I will quote a few lines:—

This my answer to the foemen, when alone I stood defenceless,
Closed the paths behind, before me, in the hour of doubt and danger.
'Is it thus the choice ye give me? ransomed life, and scornful mercy?
These, or death?—not two the offers; one alone befits the freeman.
Yet a third is mine, ye know not; reason scarce admits the venture;
Daring prompts it; and the peril bids me test it to the utmost.'
Iron-hard the rocks, and 'neath them Death securely waits his victim;—
Harder than the rocks my breast; and Death askance beholds my safety.

The image of Death enraged at his escape, like that of the Fates, idly grinning, their occupation gone, over the enemies he had slaughtered without biding their permission, was, it would seem, in Ta'abbet-Shurran's wild fancy, more than a mere poetical figure of speech. For him—so the Arab narrative, half credulous, half sceptic,

records—the desert was peopled with weird phantom shapes, all horrible, and befitting the guilty imaginings or companionship of a man of blood. Foremost among these was the 'Ghowl,' a monster half flesh, half spirit; tangible, yet ever changing its form; endowed with speech and reason, but for evil only; hating man, and ever seeking his harm. It may not be amiss here to remark, that præ-Islamitic Arab spiritualism, in the metaphysical sense of the word, seems, like that of the Jews, to have been nearly if not quite exhausted by the sole conception of a Supreme Ruler; all else, whatever is known among other races as soul, ghost, spectre, angel, demon, fairy, sprite, goblin, and so forth, was for them corporeal, or at best quasi-corporeal, and subject, though with certain appropriate modifications, to the principal conditions of animated matter, such as we experimentally reckon them. Nor was Mahomet himself, the Koran to witness, much ahead of his ancestors in this respect. It is not till a later date, when Persian, Greek, and Tatar ideas had infiltrated the national mind, that anything like the Teutonic, Celtic, or even Norse spirit appears among the phantasmagoria of Arab literature. As for the 'Ghowl,' that most popular of præ-Islamitic superstitions, and the nearest approach to a genuine Arab 'devil,' it was, to complete its corporeality, male and female, and, though remarkably tenacious of life, mortal; but when it happened at last to be killed, its carcase had the faculty—an annoying one for curious investigators—of disappearing altogether, or of presenting at most the appearance of a small piece of burnt leather, or some equally uninstructive substance. Masa'oodee, the author whose discursive work, the 'Golden Meadows,' has procured him the over-flattering title of the 'Arab Herodotus,' speculates not quite unreasonably on the matter, and inclines

to the opinion that the 'Ghowl' of old times was nothing else than some ferocious and ill-favoured wild beast, probably of the ape genus, rarely met with, and exaggerated by excited imaginations into a demon. Thus much is certain, that in proportion as Arab records approach an era of increased population and of freer intercourse between province and province, the 'Ghowl' becomes less frequent, and ultimately disappears altogether; while more spiritual conceptions, such as 'Jinn,' 'Hatif' or Banshee, ''Ayid' or 'haunting-ghost,' and the like, take its place. However, even at the present day, the inhabitants of Beja' on the Nubian frontier, and the negroes of Kordofan and Darfoor, have the good fortune to retain their 'Ghowls'—'Kotrobs' they call them—of the genuine Arab kind, perhaps their gorillas.

But in Ta'abbet's epoch the 'Ghowl,' whether demon, ape, or fancy, was no rarity; and a night-long duel between the great robber and one of these unamiable beings in the dreary valley of Roha-Batan, near Kalaat-Bisha', a few days' journey to the south-east of Mecca, may at least claim what authenticity Ta'abbet-Shurran's own verses can give it. The curiosity of the record, almost unique of its kind in its completeness, may serve to excuse the childishness of the subject:—

O bear ye the tidings to all of my clan,
The wondrous encounter in Roha's lone dell.
The fiend-guarded land, where the Ghowl of the waste
In horror and blackness contested my path.
I said, 'We are kinsmates, our fortunes are one
Thou and I; why assail me? in peace get thee gone.'
It spoke not, but darted to rend me; I turned,
Upraised in my hand the keen faulchion of Yemen;
Then fearless I struck, and the spectre before me
Lay shapeless and prone on the earth at my feet.
'Depart,' so it groaned; but I answered, 'Await,

Not threats can avail thee, nor guile set thee free.'
Slow wore the long night as I grappled the foe,
Till morning should show me what darkness concealed.
Then gleamed to the dawn the green fire of its eye,
The jaws of the panther, the snake's cloven tongue;
Distorted the foot;—who the monster would know
May seek where I sought it, and find where I found.

This last-mentioned diabolical peculiarity, the distorted or cloven foot, reappears in every Arab or negro tale of the kind, from the earliest to the latest. By what law of analogy or derivation this peculiar feature has been selected to identify the embodied power of evil in the popular myths of almost every, if not of every nation, Turanian, Arian, Celtic, or 'Semitic,' is a question to which Mr. Tylor alone can perhaps supply a satisfactory answer.

So far, however, as daring and violence carried to an almost preternatural degree are concerned, Ta'abbet-Shurran himself seems to have deserved a place among the worst ghowls of his day. I pass over the long list of plundering excursions that fill page after page of Aboo-l-Faraj, his best chronicler, with lances, swords, and blood; nor need his adventures in the southern 'valley of tigers,' where, out of sheer bravado, he passed the night unarmed and alone, nor his cattle-drivings in Nejd, nor his vengeance on the chiefs of Bajeelah, who had, treacherously enough, attempted to poison him, be here related in detail. 'What on earth do you want with the doings of Ta'abbet-Shurrân?' said his own tribesmen of Fahm, some five centuries later, to the inquisitive 'Omar-esh-Sheybanee, an annalist of some note, when he paid them a visit in their remote encampments, on purpose to learn what memories the clan might still retain of their equivocal hero; 'do you too want to set up for a highwayman?' An answer not wholly without a moral. Nor need we wonder

if, where such was the general feeling, Ta'abbet-Shurran, however distinguished for personal bravery and poetical talent, was yet, in spite of these recommendations, ordinarily so attractive, no favourite with those whose goodwill should have been the best reward of his exploits, the fair ones of the land; nay, he has himself handed down to us in verse the refusal with which a Nedjee girl of high birth met his proposals of marriage; though he consoles himself with the ungallant reflection that after all he was perhaps too good for her.

Before quitting him, however, I will relate, or rather translate at length, one more of his adventures, a very spirited one in itself, and, besides, associated with another name almost equal in the records of brigandage, and much higher on the list of præ-Islamitic poets than that of Ta'abbet-Shurran himself, the name of Shanfara' the Azdite.

With some insignificant variations, due to the remoteness of the era and the uncertainty inherent in hearsay Arab tradition, the story is as follows:—

One summer Ta'abbet-Shurran, Ebn-Barrak, also a first-class brigand, and from the same tribe of Fahm, and Shanfara' the Azdite, set out all three together on a plundering expedition against the Yemenite or southern tribe of Bajeelah, and drove off some of their cattle. Intelligence of the raid soon spread through the injured clan, and a considerable band of Bajeelah warriors set themselves on the track of the marauders, who, abandoning their booty, fled northwards, till they reached the highlands of Sorat, somewhat east of the Meccan territory, where they hoped to find refuge, and thence to pass on beyond reach into the labyrinthine entrances of Nejd. But their pursuers, aware of their intentions, anticipated them by a short cut;

and Ta'abbet-Shurran with his companions were compelled to turn aside into the low grounds behind Ta'if, westwards. It was summer, and no water fit for drinking was to be had for miles around, except in the well-known pool, or rather reservoir, of Waht, a deep hollow, overarched by rocks, and sheltered from the scorching air and sunbeams all the year through. Here the men of Bajeelah hastened to arrive the first, and here they laid ambush, certain that the brigands, parched with thirst after their long wanderings on the dry stony hills, and unable of course to carry water with them in so precipitate a flight, must necessarily attempt to refresh themselves at Waht; there was no other place. The calculation proved correct; and after nightfall Ta'abbet-Shurran, Ebn-Barrak, and Shanfara', all unsuspecting of the snare, arrived at the water. But while they stood a moment to take breath on the sheeted rock near the pool's edge, Ta'abbet turned short round, and said to his comrades,—

'Better dispense with drinking just now; we shall need all our wind for another good run this night.'

'What makes you think that?' they answered.

'Because,' he replied, 'there are men here in ambush; I can hear the beating of their hearts vibrating through the rock under my feet.'

'Nonsense,' rejoined the others, whose senses were naturally less acute, or perhaps were dulled by fatigue; 'it is only the palpitating of your own heart that you hear.'

'My heart! no, by G–d,' said Ta'abbet, as he grasped the hands of both his fellows, and pressed them close against his breast; 'feel for it; it never palpitated yet, nor is it subject to weaknesses of that kind.' Then he stooped down, and placing his ear against the ground, said, 'I hear it distinctly; there are several of them.'

'Be that as it may,' exclaimed Ebn-Barrak, 'I for my part am almost dead with thirst, and drink I must; so here goes.' With this he advanced a few steps along the ledge into the cavern, and then going down on his hands and knees, took a full draught of the water. Meanwhile, the Bajeelah ambuscade, hidden under the hollow rock further within, could, from where they were, distinctly see his form against the glimmer at the cave's mouth, for it was near moonrise; but as he was not the one they had specially set their minds on taking prisoner, they gave no signs of their presence. So when Ebn-Barrak had drunk his fill, he got up and returned to his associates outside, saying, 'I have been there, and you may take my word for it, that there is never a man hidden in the cave.'

'There are, however, and many, only it is not you but me they want to catch,' rejoined Ta'abbet-Shurran.

Next Shanfara' went in and drank, but he also was not the one, and the men of Bajeelah let him come and go quietly; so he too returned uninterfered with to the others. 'Now,' said Ta'abbet-Shurran to Shanfara', 'is my turn to try the cavern; and I know beforehand that the moment I stoop to drink, the water-ambuscade will spring out on me and make me prisoner. The instant this happens you must run off, as though you meant to escape altogether; but when you are near that rock,' pointing to one at no great distance, 'turn aside and hide up under cover of its shadow, and there keep quiet, till you hear me cry, "Catch him! catch him!" then rush suddenly back and cut my bonds.' Next addressing Ebn-Barrak: 'As for you, you must make as though you were willing to surrender yourself to them, yet take good care they do not actually get hold of you; keep clear of them, but do not go too far off.'

After giving these directions, he entered the gloom of the cavern, and hardly had he stooped and put his lips to the water, when the men of Bajeelah rushed on him from their hiding-place; some grappled him, while others bound him fast with a cord; when they had him safe, they led him out a prisoner into the open air.

Shanfara', as had been already agreed on, started off like a deer, till he hid himself out of sight under the rock; Ebn-Barrak, meantime, also made a feint of escaping, but stopped short at easy distance, where he could be clearly distinguished by the level moonlight down the valley. Then Ta'abbet-Shurran said to his captors, 'I will make you a fair offer: will you spare my life and let me go free on ransom, on condition that Ebn-Barrak also shall give himself up as prisoner, and pay you a handsome ransom too?' To this they, nothing suspecting, gave a ready assent. Hereon Ta'abbet-Shurran raised his voice and shouted, 'Halloa, you there, Ebn-Barrak! Shanfara' has got off already, and will this very night be comfortably seated before the night-fires of such and such a tribe; let him go, he is a stranger to us, and may shift for himself; but you and I are blood-relations, and have always held together for better for worse. Will you now prove yourself a friend in need, and give yourself freely up of your own accord to these men on my account, that so we may both be ransomed together?'

Ebn-Barrak at once perceived his ulterior purport, and shouted back,—

'Agreed to; but whoever wants to have me must be at the pains of catching me first; and I do not mean to let these fellows make me their prisoner till I have first taught them how easily I could have escaped them had I chosen.'

Thus saying, he ran off at full speed towards the mountain, then doubled back, repeating this manœuvre two or three times, as though out of sheer ostentation, while the men of Bajeelah amused themselves looking on. At last they thought he must be tired, and set after him in good earnest, while Ta'abbet-Shurran, as like one who enjoyed the sport, called out after them, 'Catch him! catch him!'

At the signal, Shanfara' rushed suddenly out of his hiding-place, came up to Ta'abbet-Shurran, and cut his bonds. The two without delay joined Ebn-Barrak; and then the whole band, now reunited, turned for an instant on the top of the hill, while Ta'abbet-Shurran called out to his bewildered captors,—

'My friends of Bajeelah, you have no doubt admired Ebn-Barrak's speed of foot, but now, by this heaven, I will show you something to put all else out of mind.'

He turned and fled with the swiftness of the wind; his comrades followed, and all three had soon escaped into the depths of the desert, this time not to be retaken.

But Shanfara', he who figures in this story, was no mere ordinary or professional robber like Ta'abbet-Shurran and Ebn-Barrak, with whom chance rather than mode of life associated him on the present occasion. Not plunder, but revenge, was the motor principle of Shanfara's life. By birth he was of Yemenite or 'Aarab' origin, and belonged to the tribe of Azd, being thus, according to Eastern genealogists, a direct descendant of Saba, the Sheba, it would seem, of Jewish records. While yet a child he was captured by the hostile tribe of Shebabah, on the southern frontiers of Nejd, where Manfoohah now stands amid its palm-groves and gardens; subsequently he was sold by those of Shebabah to the tribe of Benoo-Salaman,

Keysite Arabs, hostile from time immemorial to the races of Yemen. The lot of a slave was a very easy one among the pastoral Arabs of that early age; and hardly, if at all, differed, so far as treatment was concerned, from that of ordinary servants; while, on the other hand, the general conditions of free life were so hard and rough that, except for the social inferiority attached to the servile designation, slave and freeman were much on a level, and the former might easily lose even the consciousness of his own degraded state, unless purposely and exceptionally reminded of it by a taunt or a blow. This was yet more the case where, as it often happened, a slave, taken young, and brought up with the children of the family, would find little or no practical difference day by day between himself and those of his own age around him; that is, in an Eastern household, where, as a Hebrew writer has justly remarked, 'the heir differeth in nothing from a bondsman,' whatever be his dormant rights and his ultimate prospects. And thus it fell out with little Shanfara', who, purchased by a tribesman of Benoo-Salaman, grew up among his master's children, and for many years never doubted in the least that he was really one of them, till one unlucky day, while playing indoors with a girl, his master's daughter, he requested her to do him some piece of household service, addressing her at the same time by the title of 'my little sister.' The answer was a slap on the face, and a flat denial of any relationship whatever. Surprised and offended, the lad however kept his counsel, till his supposed father, who had been at the moment absent in the pastures, returned to the tent, when he at once demanded what was his own true origin and parentage. The man, wholly unaware of what had passed in the meanwhile, told him the facts. Shanfara' replied, 'For you, I have

been an inmate of your dwelling, and I will not harm you; but for your tribe, the Benoo-Salaman, by God I will never rest till I have killed a hundred men of them, in requital for the wrong they have done me in detaining me so long among them as a slave; me, free-born and noble as I am.' That very day he betook himself alone to the desert on the outskirts of the tribe, there to bide his time for the vengeance to which henceforth he devoted his whole mind and soul. For subsistence, he had perforce recourse to plunder, of which he went in quest the most often unaccompanied, more rarely attended by others, as, for instance, we have just seen him associated with Ta'abbet-Shurran and Ebn-Barrak. But whether banded or single, he never lost sight of his sworn purpose upon the Benoo-Salaman. On the tracks that led to their pastures, in the neighbourhood of their encampments, by their wells at which they watered their cattle, he would lie for days and weeks together in patient, venomous wait; till when at last some one of the doomed clansmen came in view, he would draw his bow, and, Gudrun-like, exclaiming 'At your eye,' would send an unerring shaft into the right eye of his victim. Thus he continued to do, year after year, keeping careful record of the slain, till their total amounted to ninety-nine in number, and only one remained to complete the list. But here, so recounts the popular legend, fate interposed.

What follows is savage beyond the wont of præ-Islamitic story, nor can it be read without a mixed feeling of horror and disgust. Yet it should not be omitted, because it presents us with a true picture of the darker side of the Arab character; of that strange ferocity which is indeed ordinarily concealed from view in the later and more civilized history of the nation;

yet even there, from space to space breaks out through the outer surface of acquired refinement; like plutonic rock, cropping up through the superimposed tertiary level. Nor, indeed, taking the Arab nature as a whole, could it be otherwise; for the man who has no 'devil,' or, better said, no 'beast,' in his composition, is apt to prove on emergency but half a man; and the nation that has no understratum of coarse brutality among its masses, will also—there is experience both positive and negative to show it—seldom bring a hero to light. And with this apology, if apology it can be called, I proceed to the closing scene in Shanfara's career.

Three men, two by name Khazim and Aseed, with a third, a youth and nephew of the latter, all belonging to the Salaman tribe, had pledged themselves to destroy the enemy of their race, and had long dogged his footsteps in vain. But at last they received certain intelligence of his whereabouts, and laid their ambush for him in the narrow rock-cleft gulley of Abeedah, not far from Wadee Haneefah, in the very heart of Nejd. It was night, and Shanfara', who wisely thought prevention better than cure, was accustomed, whenever he saw before him on his roamings the outline of anything that seemed a living creature through the darkness, to let fly an arrow at it, and so make sure. On the present occasion, as he came along all alone down the valley, he did not fail to discern the darker outline that, this time at least, indicated a real danger; so, stopping a moment, he said aloud, 'You are something, I think; but what you are I will soon find out,' and drew his bow. The dart, surely aimed, rent the arm of Aseed's nephew from the elbow to the shoulder, but the youth neither uttered cry nor stirred. 'If you are anything I have settled for you, and if you are nothing I have put my own mind at ease,' said Shanfara', and kept

forward on his way. But when he was close to the place where Khazim lay flat along upon the ground, right in the path waiting for him, Aseed, who had posted himself at a little distance on one side under the deep shade of the rock that edged the gulley, called out, 'Khazim, draw.' 'Oho,' said Shanfara', 'that looks as though you meant to strike next,' and instantly unsheathing his own sword, he aimed a blow at Khazim, and cut off two of his fingers. But Khazim, though wounded, threw his arms round Shanfara's waist, and grappled him, till in the struggle both fell, Khazim undermost, yet still holding fast. Meanwhile the other two came up. It was pitch dark. Aseed caught hold of a foot and called out, 'Whose foot is this?' 'Mine,' at once replied Shanfara', but Khazim yelled out, 'No, it is mine,' on which Aseed let it go, and this time grasped Shanfara' himself, and kept him down, while the three together managed to bind his hands. He said nothing more, and there the others sat beside him in silence till the morning, when they brought him prisoner to the tents of the tribe; that is, to death. Young and old, all gathered round to see him who had been so long the evil genius of Benoo-Salaman, now helpless in their power. As they led him out to the open ground behind the encampment, one said mockingly, 'Now recite us a poem of yours, Shanfara'.' 'Poems are for rejoicings,' answered Shanfara'. At the place of execution they tied him to a palm-tree, and one of them, exclaiming 'At your eye,' let fly an arrow at him and blinded him. 'Just my way,' was all Shanfara' said. Next, they struck off his right hand; he looked at it as it lay quivering on the ground, and said, 'Why leave me? 'tis the worse for thee,' but neither groaned nor complained. When, however, his executioners, before giving him the

third and death blow, asked him, 'Where do you wish us to bury you?' in the belief that such a compliance with his last request would serve to avert any revengeful visits from the other world—a common and yet existing Eastern superstition—he answered in verse:—

At your hands a tomb I take not; right or portion in my burial
Yours is none; but hear and welcome thou, hyæna of the desert:
Thou my heir; my head they claim it; once my glory, now their trophy;
But to thee the rest abandoned on the naked sands, thy portion.
Then no better life awaits me, dark and hopeless the hereafter,
Endless night to night succeeding; unatoned my crimes for ever.

Defiant of this world, defiant of the next, such was Shanfara' at all times, and not least so at the moment when that very hidden thing, the real self of man, is often most revealed. But nowhere is his indomitable self-reliance more savagely expressed than in his famous poem, famous so long as Arab literature shall exist, and known under the title of 'Lameeyat-ul-'Arab,' the completest utterance ever given of a mind defying its age and all around it, and reverting to, or at least idealizing, the absolute individualism of the savage; a poem the spirit of which, tamed down in accordance to our later day, and enfeebled by the atmosphere in which 'the individual withers, and the world is more and more,' still breathes in 'Locksley Hall,' and after a mitigated fashion in the 'Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich.' To attempt a translation of this remarkable lyric, remarkable alike in itself and in its author, would too much exceed the limits here allowed to poetical illustration; and isolated passages, if extracted, would not do it justice. It is a monolith, complete in itself; and if ever rendered, though I doubt the possibility, into English verse, must stand alone. Yet so deeply rooted

is the wild feeling that gave it origin in every Arab breast, even where law and system might most have been expected to have levelled its native roughness and smoothed away every irregular line, that we find no other a person than the austere legislator and devout Caliph, 'Omar Ebn-el-Khattab, expressly recommending the 'Lameeyat-ul-'Arab' to the careful study of the youth of his time, as a lesson of genuine manliness for their riper years. It was the manliness of the old Pagan times, which perhaps the shrewd Caliph had already perceived to be endangered by the incipient asceticism of Persianized and Christianized Islam.

It should not pass unremarked that the six verses already quoted belong to the very few of præ-Islamitic date—nor indeed are there over many later on—in which an illusion is made to a future personal existence; a topic about which the early Arabs, like the Jews of the Pentateuch, seem to have troubled themselves but little; though without positively denying such a hope—rather the reverse. It is curious too that whatever other scanty notices of Pagan Arab next-world conjecture have come down to us, do not go beyond a dreamy shadowy continuation of this life, much akin to the Odyssean Hades; Shanfara' alone hints at a retributive hereafter. But however isolated in their significance, criticism leaves no doubt as to the genuineness of the verses; and if the sentiment so moodily expressed in them be indeed peculiar to Shanfara', it only proves that his range of thought was in this respect wider and deeper than that of his contemporaries.

The Azdite had vowed the death of a hundred from among Benoo-Salaman; he accomplished it—so concludes the legend—but not till after his own. Years had passed, and his dry and fleshless skull lay

whitening on the field of doom, when a man of the hated tribe passing by, noticed and kicked the relic, in ungenerous insult to the dead. A splinter of bone entered his foot; the wound festered incurably; and in a few days more the tale of the hundred and of Shanfara's vengeance was complete.

To these two, the 'Most'areb,' or 'adscitious' Ta'abbet-Shurran, and the 'Arab, or pure blood, Shanfara', must be added one belonging to the numerous 'Muta'areb,' or half-caste Arab class, namely Soleyk, the son of Solakah. His name is more than once coupled with those of two others in the annals of præ-Islamitic brigandage; but his career, though not a whit more creditable, was yet in many respects different from theirs.

By his father's side Soleyk belonged to the great clan, or rather confederation of clans, named Benoo Tameem, the occupants then, as now, of the central provinces 'Aared, Yemamah, Aftaj, Hareek, and their adjoining pastures. His mother Solakah—after whom, either on account of resemblance in duskiness of complexion and African features, or, it may be, owing to the mere assonance of the words, he is generally surnamed 'Soleyk Ebn-Solakah,' or 'the son of Solakah'—was a negress. A remarkable knowledge of topography, and an unerring skill in the right choice of routes, however intricate, procured him further the title of Soleyk-el-Makanib, or 'of the tracks.' As a poet he stands high on the præ-Islamitic list, though on the whole inferior to Ta'abbet-Shurran, and yet more to Shanfara'; as a robber hero, he ranks as their equal, or even their superior. Nor is the estimation in which Arab annalists and *littérateurs* hold him impaired by his semi-African descent; for intermarriages between Arabs and negroes, especially in the midland and southern districts of the Peninsula, have been at

no period rare or abnormal; to such admixtures, indeed, the East owes not a few of her best celebrities: Noseyyeb the poet, Ebn-Soreyj the musician, and 'Ambarah the warrior, are well-known examples, each in his kind.

Soleyk, the son of Solakah, comes nearer to the absolute individual robber-type than either of his fellows in the historical brigand-triumvirate. Ta'abbet-Shurran organized his predatory expeditions on a scale so vast as to raise them almost to the dignity of wars; while Shanfara' had for the ultimate goal of his lawless career revenge, plunder being with him a mere accessory, necessitated by the position of an outlaw. But Soleyk, in whom the savage instincts of Africa seem to have been heightened and intensified, rather than diluted, by the infusion of Arab blood, gives us in his story and adventures an unmitigated portrait of the præ-Islamitic 'wild man;' and indicates even more distinctly than Shanfara' himself the peculiar and transition stage of Arab civilization, which rendered brigandage almost an acknowledged institution of that epoch, as in Greece now.

South-east of Mecca, on the high road to Ta'if and Yemen, spreads a wide, open, sandy space, called the plain of 'Okkad; it is within an easy ride from the capital itself. Here, from the earliest ante-historic times down to the era of Mahomet and the establishment of Islam, a great meeting, representative of the entire Arab nationality, used to be held every year, beginning with the first and ending with the twentieth day of the month that preceded the then Pagan ceremonies of the annual Hejaz-pilgrimage. This 'gathering' of 'Okkad, as it was called, bore a mixed resemblance to the Amphictyonic Council of old Greece, to the games of Elis, and to a modern Leipsic fair.

Like Elis, 'Okkad was the theatre of public and international trials of strength and skill, of horse-races, foot-races, wrestling matches, and the like; but above all, of those famous poetical contests to which we owe the seven 'Mu'allikat,' the most finished productions of the primal Arab muse. Meanwhile the innate commercial spirit of the race, a spirit that has survived the extinction of almost every other energy in Syria and Arabia, took advantage of the games and their attendant crowd to add the attractions of a yearly mercantile exhibition, in which the choicest produce of every part of the Peninsula, as also that of neighbouring and trade-connected countries, was exposed to admiration or for sale. But over and above all this, the 'gathering,' or 'fair,' of 'Okkad, had a more important, because a political and Amphictyonic, or parliamentary, character; and while the multitude betted—as Arabs no less than Englishmen will—on the horse-race, or chaffered over the wares, the chiefs of the entire Arab confederacy, or at least of what part of it was not subject to the Himyaritic sceptre, here met to discuss topics of national interest—war, alliances, treaties; to settle disputes; to regulate the conflicting claims of the social tribes; to impose new laws or abolish old; and the like. Aristocratic, in that it was composed of chiefs and leaders; democratic, in that all who met there were equal among themselves, and moreover separated by no distinction of caste or of inherent prerogative from those they governed; occasionally elective-monarchical, by the common choice of some one chieftain, pre-eminent in wisdom, valour, or influence, to whom all the rest agreed for the time to defer,—it was an institution excellently adapted to the unstable, impatient, yet reflective Arab character; and, had it survived the Islamitic crisis, might, and probably would,

have ultimately acquired that consistency and executive power which alone were wanting to render it a real Arab Congress. A matter of regret, when we consider how much more likely to be fortunate in its results such an institution would have been than the theo-monarchical rule substituted by Mahomet and his successors for the confederation sketched out in the Gathering of 'Okkad.

One year, in the midst of the innumerable crowd there collected from every Arab province—chiefs, merchants, athletes, poets, jockeys, buyers, sellers, loungers, and the rest—there suddenly appeared a lean, dusky, half-naked figure; on foot, dust-soiled, bare-headed, bare-footed, with a waist-cloth alone round its gaunt loins, and a spear in its sinewy hand. It was Soleyk, who, cool and unabashed amid the general astonishment of Arab respectability and fashion, wound in and out among the various groups assembled on the racecourse, calling aloud to each and all, 'Who will tell me the haunts of his tribe? and I will tell him the haunts of mine,'—words in technical import of unlimited defiance, and which may thus be rendered: 'Any one here present is free to attack me, and I am free to attack him in turn.' All stared and wondered, but no one seemed inclined to take up this extraordinary challenge, till a young chieftain, by name Keys, son of Maksooh, a Yemenite of the Murad clan, confronted the mulatto with 'I will tell you the haunts of my tribe, and do you tell me those of yours.' A crowd gathered round, and the two challengers mutually pledged their word of honour that neither would in any way disguise the truth from the other. Keys then said, 'Set your face between the points of the horizon whence blow the south-east and the south winds; then go on your way till you lose sight of the shadows of the trees,'—

meaning, far enough south to have the sun vertical overhead, or nearly so,—'and you will come on torrent beds: cross them, and journey on four more,'—that is, four days,—'till you come in view of a sandy plain; take the mid track that threads it, and you will reach my tribesmen, who are Murad and Kha'them, much at your service.'

Soleyk replied: 'Take your direction between the rising of Soheyl' (Canopus), 'and the left hand of Gemini which reaches up towards the top of the heavens' (indicating north-east-by-east on the compass), 'and follow straight before you; this will lead you to the haunts of my tribe, and their name is Benoo-Sa'ad, of Zeyd Menat.'

Herewith the challengers separated, and Soleyk, having obtained his object, disappeared as abruptly as he had come. Keys remained at 'Okkad till the meeting was over, and then returned to his clan, to whom he recounted his strange adventure with the unknown mulatto. But when his father Maksooh had heard the story, he exclaimed,—

'A plague on you, Keys; are you aware whose challenge it was that you accepted?'

'How should I know?' answered Keys. 'It was a half-naked black fellow on foot, who looked more like a waif than anything else. What might he be, then?'

'By heaven, it was no other than Soleyk Ebn-Solakah; and a good day's work you have done for us all,' replied his father.

Meanwhile Soleyk had betaken himself to his customary haunts in Nejd; and there had got together about him several young fellows of his acquaintance, belonging to the families of Benoo-Sa'ad, and Benoo-'Abd-Semeea, both branches of the restless Tameem

stock, the same who now form the kernel of the Wahhabee coalition. Now Soleyk had for some time past been in the habit of laying in a store of empty ostrich egg-shells; these it was his wont from time to time to fill with water, and after stopping them carefully, to bury them in the sand, one here and another there, in the loneliest tracks that led across the desert to Yemen: and when afterwards he went on his plundering raids in the full heat of summer, he was thus able, by shaping his course according to these hidden reservoirs, of which he alone had the secret, to traverse tracts of country generally believed impassable in that season of the year for want of water. On the present occasion he led his companions by one of these lonely paths. They followed, relying on his guidance; but when they were now far in the desert, and their supply of drink failed them, with no means of renewing it in view, the band turned on Soleyk, saying, 'You have brought us out into this wilderness to kill us with thirst.'

Soleyk laughed, and answered cheerily, 'Take heart, boys; there is water close at hand.'

Unluckily, so it happened, that when they came a little further on to the place where he knew that he had formerly hidden a supply, he missed the precise landmarks, and began in great distress to search backwards and forwards in every direction, like one distracted; while some of his associates said to the others: 'Whither do you mean to let this negro lead you? By heaven he will be the death of us all.'

Soleyk heard them, but took no apparent notice, and went on digging in silence, till at last he rediscovered the shells, and the whole party drank their fill. Now, however, that the injustice of the suspicion thrown upon him was clearly shown, he went a little

apart, and deliberated with himself whether he should not fall on the mutineers sword in hand and kill them; yet he restrained himself, and returning, merely counselled those who were fearful and discontented to go back, which they did then and there. The lesser number remained firm, and amongst them a young man, Sard by name, who however wept bitterly when he saw his companions disappearing in the distance. Soleyk consoled him with the remark that 'none so lucky as those despaired of.' So they went bravely on, till the diminished band reached at last the borders of their furthest goal, the territory of Kha'them. Here they halted awhile on the frontier; but during the night Sard's camel got loose; and its owner, after vainly trying to re-capture it in the darkness, was at first break of dawn descried by some of the villagers about, who, recognizing him at once by his appearance for an interloper from Nejd, laid hands on him and made him prisoner. The alarm-cry was raised, and before the sun was well above the horizon a troop of Kha'themite horsemen, with Keys the son of Maksooh at their head, came out to meet Soleyk. A sharp fight ensued, and the marauders were already beginning to yield to the superior numbers of the 'true men,' when Soleyk, singling out Keys, made straight at him, and dealt him a blow which laid him disabled on the ground. This event, Homeric fashion, decided the day; and the Kha'themites fled, leaving Keys and some other prisoners in the hands of the victors. Soleyk now took as much booty as he could conveniently drive off, exchanged Keys against Sard, let the other captives go free, and returned northwards with such good haste, that he overtook those who had abandoned him yet on their way home. Once within the limits of Nejd, Soleyk divided the booty among the few companions

who had remained by him staunch to the last, refusing any share in it to the mutineers; and further celebrated the whole affair from first to last in a poem, some verses of which have been preserved in the pages of Aboo-Faraj the Ispahanee.

Like others of his kind, Soleyk underwent great vicissitudes of fortune, in which his ingenuity, for which he was not less celebrated than for his courage, had full opportunity of displaying itself. Once, when reduced to the severest straits, he found himself at nightfall alone, supperless and shelterless, on an open plain, where the moon was slowly rising full and bright over pathless sand and stone. Soleyk, unwilling to form too conspicuous a part in a landscape where, as the only moving object, he could not fail to be at once observed by any chance comer, lay down as he was on the ground, and wrapping himself in the coarse dark mantle that forms the entire upper clothing of the poorer Arab, as the long shirt does the whole of his under raiment, was soon fast asleep. About midnight a man passed by, and, noticing the sleeper, stopped; then suddenly throwing himself upon him, pressed him down with all his weight, saying at the same time, 'Give yourself up; you are my prisoner.'

Soleyk, whose hands were entangled in his cloak, raised his head, and looking his captor in the face, quietly remarked,—

'The night is long, and the moon at the full;' a proverbial expression equivalent to 'take your time about it.'

The other, provoked at his coolness, began hitting him with his fist, repeating all the while,—

'Give yourself up, wretch! you are my prisoner.'

At last Soleyk grew tired of this game, and having managed unperceived to disengage one of his arms

from under his cloak, slipped it round the man who was still above him, and drawing him down, pressed him with so terrible a grip that the would-be aggressor yelled for pain.

'What! yelling, and uppermost!' observed Soleyk; words which have passed among the Arabs for a proverb when one who seems to have the best of it really has the worst.

'Who are you?' he added, after the other had sufficiently felt his iron strength.

'I am one,' replied the man, 'who was once rich and prosperous, but have now fallen into utter want, till for very shame I have abandoned my tribe, vowing that I would never return among them till I should, somehow and somewhere, have regained my former wealth.'

'All right!' answered Soleyk; 'do you come along with me.'

When morning dawned they went on together, and chanced on a third man, in much the same condition as themselves, and who readily associated with them. Soleyk now took the lead, and all together shaped their way for the 'Jowf,' or 'hollow;' not the Jowf of Northern Arabia, on the confines of Syria, but the large Oasis, low-lying as an oasis always does in tropical deserts, and situated amid the sands of the 'Dahna',' behind mid-Yemen. It is a region, so Arab travellers inform us, of wonderful fertility, but little visited from without, owing to the encircling sands, and, so far as Europeans are concerned, wholly, I believe, unexplored. After many weary days Soleyk and his companions arrived at their land of promise, and, sheltered from view by a ledge of rock, peeped down into a long green valley, full of sheep and camels grazing securely among unarmed herdsmen: an easy prey, it seemed. But the marauders, who had never

visited the spot before, feared lest some encampment or village might be near, where alarm could be given in time to prevent their own escape with their meditated booty. After some deliberation Soleyk said,—

'I will go down, alone, and have a talk with the shepherds, while you two remain ensconced here, and keep a sharp look out. If then I learn that the owners themselves of the cattle are in the neighbourhood, I will turn quietly back, as if nothing were the matter, and rejoin you; should they however happen to be a good way off, I will give you a signal, and do you two then rush down and help me drive off the plunder.'

Accordingly the associates remained crouching in their place, while Soleyk, after rounding some way behind the hill, began sauntering down into the valley from another direction, with an easy, careless air, till he reached the herdsmen, negroes like himself. Sitting down beside them, he engaged them in conversation, till, from question to answer, he found out who were their masters, and that they belonged to a village situated at a considerable distance from the grazing ground. Satisfied on this point, Soleyk stretched himself lazily on the grass, and proposed a song to while away the time. The herdsmen, fond of music as beseemed their colour, approved the idea, and Soleyk, raising his voice so as to be heard by his friends in their hiding-place, thus began:—

O! the valley,—lone and peaceful; not a soul amid the rocks,
But the maids that milk the cattle, and the slaves that guard the flocks!
Come and see them, nearer yet; 'tis a pleasant sight to view;
Or we'll rove amid the pastures by the morning breeze and dew.

There was no mistaking the hint; out rushed the bandits, off ran the shepherds, while Soleyk and his

accomplices drove off cattle enough to enrich them all three, and were far away from pursuit long before the owners could come to the rescue.

On another occasion, however, Soleyk had nearly come to grief. While prowling about the grazing-grounds of the 'Awara tribe, on the frontiers of Nejd, he was observed and surrounded in such a manner that to fight or to fly seemed alike impossible. Hereon he made straight for the tents of the tribe itself, and, reaching them, entered the nearest at a venture; within he found no one but a young girl, Fakihah by name, whom he besought to protect him from the fury of her own clanspeople. Without hesitation she cast the skirt of her long garment—the trailing robe worn by Arab women up to the present day, and which the fiction of Mahometan tradition affirms to have been introduced by Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, when cast out by Abraham—over him; caught down a sword from where it hung on a tent-pole, unsheathed it, and thus stood waiting the pursuers, who soon crowded in. Enraged at finding themselves baulked of their certain prey, they began by reviling the girl; and, when she took no heed of words, prepared to drag away her suppliant by force. But Fakihah, nothing daunted, tore off her veil and cast it on the ground, while bare-headed and sword in hand she loudly called on her own brothers for help. At her cry they came, and, putting every other consideration aside, took their sister's part so effectually, that Soleyk got away unharmed, and, in grateful acknowledgment, afterwards presented Fakihah with the following verses:—

Be thy fame far-spread as thy deservings,
Trustiest friend, fair daughter of 'Awara!
In their child her parents well may glory,
In their sister's honour vaunt her brothers.

Perfect as her mind each outward feature,
Perfect beauty linked to perfect virtue.
Not the free, the flaunting, wins affection,
But the chaste, the bashful, leads me captive;
She the fearless, when her pledge redeeming
Sword in hand, unveiled, she faced the danger.

Outlaws, and in many respects savages as these men undoubtedly were, they yet contrast favourably with the average robbers and brigands of mediæval and later times; not least so in the care they took to maintain fresh the intellectual and poetical element in their own nature, as though seeking by it to colour or gild actions else unseemly, and to avoid the commonplace vulgarity of mere prosaic crime. Nor were they—the pressure of imminent danger or special motives of revenge, such as animated Shanfara', for instance, apart—cruel or bloodthirsty; on the contrary, they seem to have derived from the old Mephistophelian doctrine, often sung in Arab verse, that 'blood is quite a peculiar sort of juice,' the very anti-Mephistophelian conclusion, that therefore it should not be needlessly shed. If to the Rob Roy of Walter Scott—not the Rob Roy of history—were added the poetical faculty and imaginative range of a Skald or a Minnesanger, the mountain borders of Scotland would, in fiction at least, have had their Ta'abbet-Shurrans and Soleyks no less than the debateable lands of Nejd and Yemen. Meanwhile, it is evident that men of this stamp could take their rise only among a people of excessive, though as yet unorganised, energy; and that such sparks could only be thrown out from a mighty and glowing volcano, not far off some general eruption. Soleyk was earlier, but the era of Ta'abbet-Shurran preceded that of Mahomet by scarce a century.

However, for all their better qualities, the ban of

the 'bloody and deceitful' was on them. Shanfara's end we have already seen; and Ta'abbet-Shurran and Soleyk, both of them, closed their wild and restless lives by a violent death: the former being killed while on a raid against his old enemies of Hodeyl, within the confines of Jebel Aseer, where he was buried in a cave that tradition yet points out at the present day; the latter met his fate far away in the depths of Yemen. It was long before the particulars of the precise how and where of his death reached Nejd; and during this interval Soleyk's epitaph was composed by his negress mother, Solakah, from whom it would seem that her son inherited his poetical talent. It is a wail not unbefitting such a life and such an end:—

Far he wandered; but when farthest
Fated death o'ertook the wanderer.
O! my loved one! would thy mother
But could know how died her offspring.
Was it sickness lone and dreary,
None to aid thee, none to comfort?
Was it guile of hidden foeman?
Was it that, the unknown shadow
That outspeeds the bird of passage?—
Man is ever death-attended,
Ambushed death, and we the victims.
Yet adorned with all that honours,
Satiate of success he found thee.
Answerest not?—how wide the sevrance
That forbids my call thy answer.
Still, one hour, my heart;—it stills not.
How console me? Drear the silence,
Drear the path whence no returning.
Would for thine, my son, my hero,
Were thy mother's death the ransom.

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